

Check against delivery



Remarks by Richard Bennett

Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal

Delivered at a Programme Organised by Victims of the Jana Andolan, Injured and Martyred Families Concern Centre Ad-Hoc Committee
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Mr. Sudharshan KC; experts on the panel; representatives from political parties; colleagues from the human rights community; members of the media; friends:

Thank you for inviting me to this programme today. As you may be aware, my Office, OHCHR-Nepal, has adapted to the changed situation in Nepal and one of the areas where we are now supporting our partners is to ensure that every Nepali – no matter his or her caste, ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation or region – is able to participate in the Constitution-making process. So I would like to applaud the Ad-Hoc Committee for taking the initiative of organising this interaction in order to raise the awareness of your members and to make submissions to the CA committees.

It is important that the voices and concerns raised by victims' groups will be genuinely heard and reflected in the draft Constitution as it evolves.

I have noticed that you are also going to discuss rule of law and transitional justice issues in coming sessions and I would like to make a few points in this regard. As you are aware, in recent years a number of special commissions have been established to investigate serious human rights violations and crimes in Nepal. Unfortunately, most of the reports of these commissions have not been made public and there have been no visible consequences for the alleged perpetrators. OHCHR has long been supporting the fight against such impunity, in order to ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable for them.

When she visited Nepal last month, High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay was encouraged that the Government has taken some positive steps in this regard, including holding consultations on a mechanism to respond to the needs of victims of human rights violations, and their families, for truth, justice and reparations. At the same time, I would like to note that the High Commissioner highlighted the need to ensure that the transitional justice process be victim-centric.

An important role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to speak out in support of victims, and that is my role too.

OHCHR-Nepal will continue to respond positively to requests to support the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms to help ensure that they meet the standards required by international law and respond to victims' needs. You will undoubtedly hear more about these issues at tomorrow's sessions, including one to be delivered by OHCHR. I hope that it will respond to your needs, and I wish you every success for this weekend's programme.

Thank you.

For further information contact Marty Logan, Tel.: 428 0164 (Ext.321); 98510 16922 (mobile), mlogan@ohchr.org, or Chun Gurung, tel: 4280164, ext 320; 98510 16937 (mobile), cgurung@ohchr.org

Website: <http://nepal.ohchr.org>