



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



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**UN human rights chief encourages  
South Asian judges to further open up justice to all**

BANDOS, THE MALDIVES – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Monday urged South Asian judges to continue developing “cutting-edge mechanisms for opening up justice to all.”

At the opening of a key encounter of regional judges and experts from the Office of the High Commissioner and the Human Rights Council, Pillay stressed in a video message that “inequality and discrimination remain an enormous challenge across the world,” and singled out what she described as “the burden of multiple discrimination” that affects women, the poor, caste groups and indigenous peoples, among many others.

“This web of inequality and discrimination produces swathes of social exclusion and disadvantage in our societies,” the High Commissioner said. “The judiciary can and must play a critical role in fighting the scourges of inequality and discrimination.”

Regional judges are attending the Colloquium for Judges on Equality and Non-Discrimination, hosted by the Government of the Maldives. In the course of the two-day event, they will discuss the interpretation of the principles of equality and non-discrimination by courts in the region and the role of judges in ensuring access to justice for all.

The UN human rights chief emphasized that judges can give force to guarantees of equality and non-discrimination by facilitating access to justice. “Regardless of the substance of a complaint, some individuals’ claims will never be heard because of barriers to justice that discriminate against them,” she said. “This is an area in which judges may have even more power to counter discrimination and exclusion.”

Pillay noted that her Office works closely with judges from around the world and hoped to strengthen its cooperation with judiciaries in South Asia. “Our aim is to support the judiciary, through the dissemination of good practices and comparative jurisprudence, and to facilitate the sharing of experience and insights among peers,” she said.