



Remarks by Richard Bennett
Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in Nepal
At the Signing of *Guidelines for Cooperation*
with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
20 February 2009

The Hon. Chief Commissioner, Mr. Kedar Nath Upadhyay, and other NHRC commissioners; staff members of the National Human Rights Commission; members of the media; colleagues; ladies and gentlemen:

I am extremely pleased that OHCHR-Nepal has signed these *Guidelines for Cooperation* with the NHRC today. The Guidelines set out a framework for continued and enhanced cooperation between my Office, OHCHR-Nepal, and the Commission and also acknowledge that the complementary relationship between these two organisations – which is based on diverse skills, knowledge and experiences – will greatly contribute to the strengthening of human rights in Nepal.

The Guidelines are operational in nature. They respect the NHRC's constitutional mandate and OHCHR's mandate in Nepal as defined in its Agreement signed with the Government.

Key areas of collaboration will include the promotion of human rights through the dissemination of information and educational materials and the organisation of joint trainings for, amongst others, government, law enforcement officials and civil society. Both OHCHR and the NHRC will continue to actively engage with civil society in the pursuit of human rights goals and undertake joint activities with civil society partners, particularly human rights defenders, wherever appropriate.

OHCHR will continue to monitor human rights in Nepal as per its mandate, and will follow up cases it has investigated over the past four years, but will refer new complaints of human rights violations to the NHRC. My Office will then meet regularly with the NHRC at regional and national levels to provide technical assistance and advisory services and undertake joint activities on these cases.

Through these collaborative endeavours, the NHRC and OHCHR-Nepal aim to share responsibility for enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights, including in the fight against impunity, and to promote the Government's compliance with international human rights treaties to which Nepal is a party.

In closing, I would like to say that OHCHR-Nepal is looking forward to working even more closely with the NHRC.