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**Statement by**

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**High-level Segment**

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**Mr. President,**

**Mr. High Commissioner,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

I feel honoured to address this august gathering of the 34th session of the Human Rights Council.

**Mr. President,**

The Human Rights Council has been playing an important role in creating an environment for enjoyment of universal human rights across the world.

As human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, there should be no selective preference to one set of rights over others.

Only a holistic look can give us a correct picture of what measures are necessary for better promotion and protection of all human rights.

In this context, I must state that the Universal Periodic Review has become a hallmark of international cooperation in the realm of human rights.

I am happy to share that the Government of Nepal has taken necessary measures to implement the recommendations made during the second UPR in November 2015.

**Mr. President,**

For many developing countries like Nepal, the right to development bears a profound meaning. Greater flows of ODA, foreign direct investment, technology transfer, improvement of connectivity, including transit and transport, and market access for goods and services are some of the measures that can help to achieve the development aspirations of less developed countries.

We stress that the right to development should be mainstreamed and be treated on equal footing as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

We stand for an earliest conclusion of the protracted negotiation on an agreement on the right to development.

Realization of this right should be an integral part of the implementation of the SDGs and other internationally agreed development goals.

We welcome the decision of the Council last September to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development.

While inclusive development is not possible in the absence of human rights, we must also recognise that socio-economic development contributes for sustaining and institutionalizing the human rights gains.

**Mr. President,**

The political transformation that has taken place in Nepal over the last decade is to ensure equal rights to all of our people.

We chose to adopt a federal system of governance to manage the diversity characteristic to Nepal in a fair and equitable manner. Human rights forms a fundamental pillar of the Constitution of Nepal promulgated through the elected Constituent Assembly in September 2015.

The Constitution consolidates inclusive democratic polity, pluralism, the rule of law, representative and accountable government, social and economic justice, and universally accepted human rights.

Our constitution has provisions to address any issues within its framework. The two amendments that were made within months of its promulgation amply prove it.

Cognizant of the ethnic, geographic and linguistic diversity of the country, we want to accommodate legitimate aspirations of all segments of our society.

It is in this spirit that the Government of Nepal is engaged in dialogue with concerned stakeholders to address some of the issues where differences persist.

In our effort to implement the constitution, preparations for holding of democratic elections for all three tiers of the federal set-up have begun. The elections for local bodies are scheduled on 14th of May this year.

Reconstruction and rebuilding of the ravaged infrastructures, and providing necessary support to the victims of 2015 earthquake constitute priorities of the present government.

**Mr. President,**

Nepal is a party to 24 human rights instruments, including seven of the nine core human rights conventions and protocols.

Our efforts to internalize these international obligations through domestic laws and enforcement measures are ongoing.

With the promulgation of the constitution, the peace process that was initiated in 2006 has basically been concluded.

To fully address the issue of transitional justice, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission on Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons are currently engaged.

Terms of the Commissions have recently been extended for completion of their mandates. This will allow the investigation and prosecution of all allegations of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian laws, and to bringing the perpetrators to justice.

The Government is fully committed to provide all support to the effective functioning of these Commissions as well as to streamline the statutory issues to make them fully compliant with international standards.

We are also committed to address the needs of the victims, including reparations and compensations, and create an atmosphere of reconciliation in society as per the spirit of Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2006.

**Mr. President,**

We have very active print, audio and visual media both at the national and local level.

Civil society organizations are recognized as partners in development, and many of them play the role of human rights defenders.

With increased awareness and education, any incidence of discrimination or violence gets reported, which helps in taking action against violators.

Our policy of positive discrimination and reservation in state structures is bearing fruits. Traditionally disadvantaged section of our society are provided with better access to education, health service and employment opportunities.

We have a constitutional guarantee of ensuring equitable and proportional representation in the elected State structures. There is a provision for political representation of 33 per cent women at the central and provincial levels and 40 per cent at the local level.

It is hardly a coincidence that the President, the Chief Justice, and the Speaker of the Parliament in Nepal at present are women.

**Mr. President,**

Our commitment to the value of human rights is total.

We are making serious efforts to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission and other independent constitutional commissions established with the objective of protecting and promoting human rights in all spheres of national life.

The Nepal Human Rights Commission conforms to the Paris principles and has been conferred with ‘A’ status.

Nepal’s judiciary is independent and competent to uphold and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Supreme Court has given landmark judicial pronouncements, which have expanded scope of human rights jurisprudence and added new dimensions to the realization of human rights.

**Mr. President,**

Dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights, and our sincere desire to contribute to the work of the Council, Nepal has presented candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2018 - 2020.

Following successful democratic transition, we want to share the experience of our unique peace process to the world community. By being in the Council we also aspire to benefit from the international experiences for the consolidation of culture of human rights.

We believe that fair opportunity of all interested States to serve in the UN Human Rights Council would contribute to the common goals of promotion and protection of human rights everywhere.

This is the first time Nepal has presented its candidature to the Council. I take this opportunity to solicit support from all member and observer States to our candidature.

In conclusion, **Mr. President,** our earnest efforts in protection and promotion of human rights in our national context are bearing fruits. We want to play a role in advancing the ideals of human rights to make it a reality for peace, prosperity and wellbeing of people everywhere. And, we seek your support on this.

I thank you.