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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL



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NHRC appointments an important development – OHCHR-Nepal

The recent appointment of commissioners to the National Human Rights Commission is an important development for human rights in Nepal. For over a year, the functioning of the Commission has been hampered by the lack of commissioners, at a crucial time when it should have been taking a leading role in promoting and protecting human rights.

The appointment of the commissioners is an opportunity to develop the NHRC into a credible human rights institution that maintains its independence and upholds national and international human rights standards. The new commissioners face a challenging task in fulfilling their responsibilities. Fortunately, NHRC already has a nationwide infrastructure and staff, which form a solid basis for strengthening the institution under the leadership of the new commissioners.

OHCHR notes that the appointment process itself has drawn criticism from a number of groups, and reiterates the importance of compliance with the relevant international standards for human rights institutions (Paris Principles), including that the appointment process for NHRC Commissioners should ensure pluralism, respect for diversity and active and broad participation of all “civilian forces” in society. Next month, the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions will review the NHRC’s status of compliance with the Paris Principles. The Office urges the Government to reinforce the process that it has begun and to bring the Commission into full compliance with international standards in the future.

“I have already spoken with the new Chief Commissioner, Rt. Hon. Kedar Nath Upadhyaya, and look forward to meeting with the new Commissioners at the earliest opportunity to discuss ways that OHCHR can work together with the NHRC and, with the support of other international and regional human rights mechanisms, assist it to develop into an independent, credible and effective institution that works for the human rights of all Nepalese,” said Richard Bennett, Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.