

**Speech of Chairman N. B. Khatri on the occasion of National Human Rights Commission, Capacity Development Project Review Committee Meeting, March 12, 2003**

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**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all today for the Project Review Committee meeting of the Capacity Development Project jointly initiated by His Majesty's Government and United Nations Development Program to help build the capacity, and thereby, institutionalize the National Human Rights Commission. In the course of the meeting today we would like to present the Annual Project Report of 2002, the ongoing process of our development and institutionalization, and our recent accomplishments with the support of our valued international donors to this project. We are also sharing our plan for the year 2003 with you to let you know what we will be doing through the project in the months ahead. We earnestly seek your valuable suggestions and recommendations on our ongoing and proposed activities.**

**The Capacity Development Project has been crucial for the Commission in a number of ways. The activities being supported include the promotion of human rights through education and outreach; protection of human rights through a complaint and investigation mechanism; legislative review and treaty compliance process; effective implementation of human rights through monitoring and advisory functions, and the provision of human rights policy advise to the Government. The project has also supported the development of the Commission's administrative and management capacity. Over the last ten months, the Commission was subjected to a broad re-organization process, with the development of a strategic plan, internal planning, and several trainings and study tours which were conducted to give a firm grounding to the Commissioners and staff in the area of the Commission's statutory responsibilities. The Project is providing support to all Divisions of the Commission in a bid to make it strong internally. We will undertake more education, information and awareness activities in the current year. The enhanced capacity of the National Human Rights Commission through all these initiatives has therefore helped the cause of human rights in Nepal in different ways.**

**A particular mention must be made of our efficiency to deal with many current issues of the day. The Commission has increasingly become vigilant of violations of human rights throughout the country. Issues are regularly taken up with the concerned Ministries and departments of His Majesty's Government, the police and security forces, and the general administration, calling for their accountability on matters under our mandate. The relations of the Commission with the print and electronic media have been further strengthened. With the help of the media and**

through various awareness programmes that we have conducted, the image of the National Human Rights Commission has been further enhanced and its voice is reaching to a wide spectrum of the Nepalese society. We are happy to note that these enhanced capacities would greatly contribute to the growth of the Commission.

We have utilized our full capacity to monitor human rights, give our comments on crucial human rights issues, and help enforce the culture of human rights and further the prospect of peace. In this process, the National Human Rights Commission had repeatedly called for the materialization of the long awaited ceasefire between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) and the Government in order to sort out the conflict with a human rights approach to peace building. As part of the next phase of the peacemaking process, the Commission has also called on both the Government and the Maoists to sign a formal ceasefire agreement inclusive of a code of conduct or guiding principles, which should include a list of do's and don'ts to facilitate the dialogue. It is also the belief of the Commission that human rights issues should be a major agenda in the process ahead, which should involve the government, the political parties as well as all members and institutions of the civil society in the protection of the rights of all people, specifically the rights of the victims of the conflict. Only through the concerted efforts of all concerned organizations and groups, it is possible to establish a culture of human rights in the country, which is the ultimate goal of an organization like the National Human Rights Commission. We believe that it is possible through a clear policy of ensuring respect for human rights in all spheres of public and private life.

Along with the continued support and cooperation extended to us by the donors, we hope to be a stronger and more effective institution to protect and promote human rights in Nepal. In this regard, we may need more international consultants, among other things, in the appropriate areas to build our capacity. In any case, we are always conscious to make sure that the projects as well as our overall objectives are accomplished and that the inputs that we receive have net contribution towards protecting the human rights of the people.

I look forward to your inputs on the details of our plans and activities, which will now be presented to you.

**Thank You**