

"Meaningful and effective participation in Economic and development policy-making."

Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr. President, Madam Chairperson, Ladies and gentlemen

About twenty percent of the population of Nepal are Dalits. Dalits are historically excluded and discriminated against on the basis of caste. Dalits are a particularly vulnerable group in Nepal. Dalits experience extreme poverty, bonded labour, forced prostitution and many other hardships due to the discrimination against them and therefore need specific measures to be taken to stop this discrimination.

Nepal has been moving forward to build the new nation by the historical peoples movement in 2006, but are still one of the least developed countries in the world. People live in extreme circumstances of homelessness and landlessness, unemployment, illiteracy and ill health with 25% people being landless, the majority of these people are Dalits. Political uncertainties have severely affected the effectiveness of ongoing development programmes, which eventually have implications on ensuring the basic rights of Dalits and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Nepal is moving forward by making a new constitution and restructuring the federal Democratic Republic state. We have both opportunities and challenges in ensuring Dalit rights as fundamental rights in the new constitution of Nepal.

These are our recommendations to the government of Nepal

- There is a need for constitutional provisions for Dalits to ensure their equal access to all private and public sectors.
- The State should see that all matters relating to employment for Dalit who have been systematically excluded from mainstream employment is ensured by guaranteeing equal access and opportunities in all sectors.
- Dalit children should have equal access to public and private school for quality education for their economic development of life.
- All kinds of bonded labours and forms of exploitation of labour as fixed by feudal land-use system such as *Haliya and other groups*, should be abolished and policies should be formulated and effectively implemented make necessary arrangements to rehabilitate *Haliyas* (tillers) and landless Dalits by providing them with required piece of land and a place to live.
- The State should make arrangements for government subsidy and loan without collateral to promote business for Dalit community by setting up small enterprises and modernizing the skills needed for Dalits' profession, and ensure market for their products.

- Policies should be formulated for a fair and compulsory participation of Dalit community in the planning of all development and other activities of the government that are aimed to bring about social change as well as in all the programmes launched by private sectors.
- Dalit and minority employment should be guaranteed with their proportional participation in the industries and enterprises run by government, semi-government and private sector on the basis of constitutional principles.
- In view of the fact that most of the Dalit communities fall within the ultra poor living under the poverty line and that the poverty alleviation programmes have not be able to reach such communities, the State should formulate and implement effective policies in this regard to reach the target groups.
- Government should strictly and honestly implement all of Human Right instruments and international laws which had been signed and ratified by Nepal as member state.

I would like to request all of you to raise your voices and shake hands against all forms of caste based discrimination, Untouchability and human rights violation and dignity of Dalit.

Thank You.

Address of Advocate Trilok Chand Vishwas V.K.,

General Secretary- Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization, Nepal