

Seventeenth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues

November 2024 - Sundar Bahadur Sheni statement

Theme: Minority Representation in Public Space

Thank you, Madam Chair,

I am Advocate Sundar Bahadur Sheni from Nepal, Delegate of the International Dalit Solidarity Network, and Founder of the Global Legal Defense Fund. I speak on behalf of the Dalit Minority Forum of Nepal. Dalit communities, especially Dalit young women and Madhesi women face multiple layers of discrimination, excluding them from public and political life, decision-making processes, and youth leadership. Hate speech—both offline and online—exacerbates their marginalization.

This discrimination violates Nepal's Constitution, which guarantees inclusion and breaches international human rights standards. Immediate action is needed to ensure their rights and representation.

I recommend the following:

1. Political parties should promote Dalit Gender Balance candidates in direct elections, from local to federal levels.
2. Nepal must implement Business and Human Rights policies with a focus on minority rights and Dalit Communities are considered major stakeholders.
3. Enforce anti-discrimination laws to end caste-based practices.
4. Ensure at least two Dalits are included in every Provincial to federal council of ministers.
5. Promote Dalit Communities in leadership roles in every public space e.g., The Internal Political party, the National Commission, judiciary, and other ambassadors' appointments
6. Adopt zero-tolerance policies in all state institutions toward caste-based discrimination.

Thank you to the International Dalit Solidarity Network for making this opportunity and OHCHR for this Global Platform prospect to amplify the voices of marginalized communities.

Thank you, Madam. Chair.