

Human Rights Council
Forum on Minority Issues
Seventh Session
Geneva, 25-26 November 2014

“Forum on Minority Issues “Preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities”.

Agenda 4: Improving prevention of violence and atrocity crimes.

Statement presented by: Dan Bahadur Bishwokarma, Nepal- OHCHR 2014 Minorities Fellowship Programme

Ms Chairperson
Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

Let me introduce myself, my name is Dan Bahadur Bishwokarma. I belong to Dalit community and here represent Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO), a Minority NGO working in protection and promotion of Dalit rights in Nepal since 1994.

It is hard to believe for many, that even in the 21 century the concept of purity and impurity based on birth exist. However, it is reality for millions of Dalit people living particularly in South Asia. Dalit people are the most excluded and marginalized group in Nepal. They continue to experience untouchability on a daily basis.

Let me highlight some of the Dalit human rights challenges which require attention by State and international community.

- By the early 2015, as committed by political parties, Nepal’s constitution will be promulgated; however, this is a challenging moment in guaranteeing special measures for the promotion and protection of minority rights for all minority groups.
- Lack of effective implementation of Caste based discrimination and untouchability (2011) law have not contributed substantially in reducing practice of caste discrimination and untouchability.
- Dalit women face double discrimination: as women and as Dalit minority. They are frequently targeted to rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment because of their lower status in the society.

Hence I recommend the following points to the forum;

1. As preventive measure, we support the Recommendation 17 and suggest to include special measures such as affirmative action for fair representation at political and decision making bodies.
2. I endorse Recommendation 31 and emphasize engagement with religious leader to prevent potential violence as often basis for discrimination found within religious

doctrine. Prejudice must be tackled through changes in religious teaching materials and curriculum used in schools and places of worship.

Thank you very much for your attention!