

**A brief report of an Interaction Program on  
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for the Right to Life  
(11 May 2007, Kathmandu)**

**1. Background**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights was introduced by the UN in 1948. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) were introduced in 1966 and enforced in 1976.

Nepal became State party to the ICESCR, which deals with second generation rights, late in 1990. Similarly, the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 has incorporated most of the rights mentioned in ICESCR, such as rights to equal wage, employment, basic health care, education, culture, script, monuments and food as the fundamental rights. Attainment of civil and political rights is impossible without guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights.

Therefore, considering the need to create pressure to ensure fulfillment of these rights, Amnesty International Nepal (AI Nepal) and FOHRID Human Rights and Democratic Forum jointly organized this interaction program. AI Nepal contributed the hotel cost and FOHRID provided stationary to organize the program.

**2. Objectives**

- To create public awareness and provide orientation on the international covenant to ensure guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights.
- To analyze international instruments, practice and Nepalese experience on economic, social and cultural rights.

**3. Expected outcomes**

- Participants from government and non-government sector will be aware and oriented on the rights enshrined in the ICESCR.
- Participants will realize the practical application and need of ICESCR.

**4. Program modality**

- Paper presentation by expert,
- Observations from the panelists,
- Views of participants on the discussion paper and the observations of the panelists,
- Analysis of the discussion paper, observations and views by the observers,
- Collection of suggestions and presentation of conclusion,
- Conclusion of the program.

Geeta Neupane, Central Member of AI Nepal welcoming the experts, panelists, participants and observers threw light on the relevance of the program; likewise, Chandra Kumar Adhikari, Central General Secretary of the same organization thanked the participants and concluded the program as a Chair. Advocate Hari Chandra Bhattarai of FOHRID conducted the program as the Master of Ceremony.

## **5. Participants**

Total 106 individuals participated the program. Representatives from Ministries, National Planning Commission, Poverty Alleviation Fund, National Dalit Commission, National Women Commission, National Human Rights Commission, government bodies, judiciary, Bar Association, diplomatic missions, INGOs, Dalit federation, Janajati federation, Karnali Region Pressure Group, NGOs, media, and former justice, former Ministers, MPs, diplomats, lawyers participated the program.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations**

Following conclusions and recommendations were at the end of the program:

- Discrimination de jure and de facto on the basis of ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, race, origin etc. should be explored. Economic, social and cultural rights should be guaranteed for the people's right to live.
- Economic, social and cultural rights should be guaranteed for minorities, ethnicities, women, aged people and disabled including foreign employees, stateless persons and refugees.
- Access to economic, social and cultural rights should be guaranteed with due importance in the post conflict period as it is more at risk during such a time.
- The provision in the covenant should be familiarized at the public level to ensure protection of human dignity.
- Public pressure should be created to compel the government to guarantee these rights through promulgation of appropriate law.
- Information about ICESCR should be disseminated to the people living in poverty and backward areas.
- Campaign for guarantee of ICCPR and ICESCR should be taken forward together.
- Implementation of ICESCR is necessary to ensure justice in all sectors including social, economic and political for the protection of human life, property and ensuring equality and freedom.
- As the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 has already incorporated the rights to health, education, culture, employment and social security as fundamental rights of the people, special law based on the ICESCR should be prepared and promulgated immediately.
- Human rights activists, occupational groups, lawyers, journalists, NGOs, INGOs and the civil society should be cautious in this regard.
- Government, parliament, human rights activists, occupational groups, lawyers, journalists, NGOs, INGOs and the civil society should be careful to implement economic, social and cultural rights to avoid discrimination on the basis of region, race, religion, gender, ethnicity and language.
- Main responsibility to implement the Covenant ratified by a State goes to the government. Strong commitment of the government is necessary for this. The State party cannot be spared from the responsibility for any reason. As one right is dependent to another, it is necessary to respect, protect and fulfill all the concerned rights to ensure dignified life for the people.