

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
13TH SESSION (01-26 Mar 2010)**

**AGENDA ITEM 10: General Debate on HCHR Reports on
Afghanistan and Nepal
(24th Mar 2010)**

Statement by India

Mr. President,

We thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for her reports and would like to confine our remarks to her reports on the situation of human rights in Nepal and Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

02. With regard to the High Commissioner's report on Nepal, we agree with the Report's conclusion that Nepal has reached major milestones in the past three years, including the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the restoration of democracy. We take positive note of the progress made by Nepal in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the establishment of a national human rights institution. We take note of some of the concerns expressed in the Report and appreciate the commitment displayed by the Government to safeguard its human rights obligations amidst serious challenges. We look forward to the early conclusion of the peace process and the drafting of the new Constitution to make Nepal a multi-party and inclusive democracy, in keeping with the wishes of its people. We believe that, in view of the progress made by Nepal, and the changed political circumstances, it is time to revisit the context in which the Council had given a mandate with regard to Nepal.

03. With regard to the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, we share the broad conclusion that Afghanistan stands at a watershed and the new government faces a complex set of challenges in improving human rights situation. We take note of the Report's concern at the limited gains for human rights in the country last year, the need to bring pressure on anti-government elements to deter them from committing human rights

violations, and the need for an impetus to human rights priorities in the institution-building process, including steps for strengthening the rights of women and the rule of law.

Mr. President,

04. We understand the concerns expressed at the democratic process in Afghanistan. These concerns, however, have to be juxtaposed against the broader sweep of Afghan history. Transformation in Afghanistan will not occur overnight. Democracy is likely to take time to take root, and to come to terms with the country's history and traditions. The Afghan people turned out in great numbers to participate in the elections, despite the threats and intimidation by the Taliban. Millions of Afghan children, millions of girl children, are now in schools when none was in school when the Taliban was in power. For safeguarding human freedoms, one has to take a balanced view.

05. The road to peace in Afghanistan will be long and hard. Our collective commitment must be sustained by firm resolve and unity of purpose aimed at ensuring security and development in the country. The evolution of Afghanistan as a stable and moderate nation state is vital for the region and the world. Given the high stakes involved, the international community must stand steadfast against the challenge posed by religious fundamentalism in Afghanistan that would otherwise have far-reaching consequences for peace and stability for all of us. It is, thus, vital that all major regional and international players put their weight behind the government of Afghanistan. This is the only way Afghanistan can be helped to meet the daunting challenges it faces. On its part, India stands fully committed to assisting the Government and people of Afghanistan as they build a pluralistic, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. President.
