

"SPEAK UP END DISCRIMINATION"

Interaction Programme, December, 6, 2010

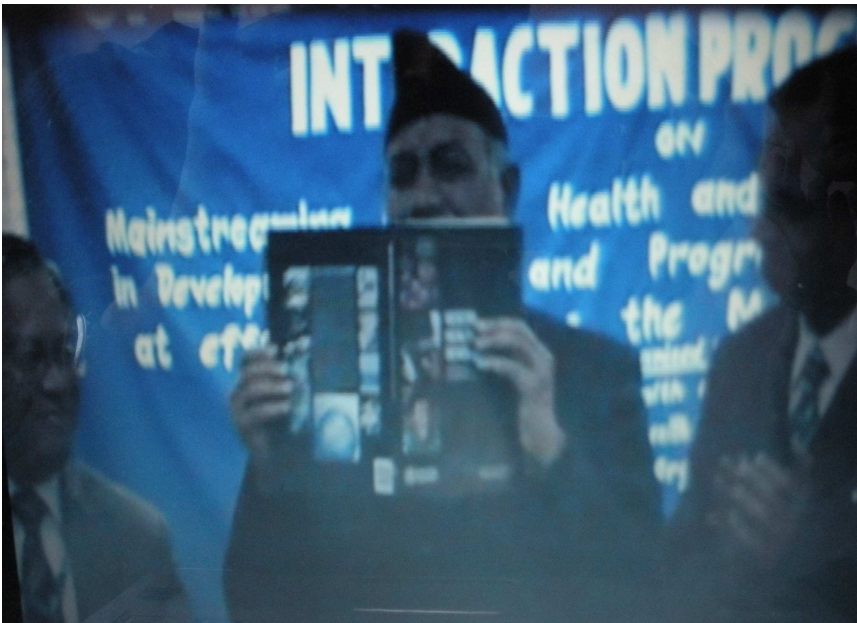
December is a month of celebration for the persons with disabilities. On the third of December, we celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. On the tenth of December we celebrate the World Human Rights day. To mark the days, KOSHISH, National Mental Health Self-Help Organization, organized an interaction programme on December 6, to sensitize and remind the related stakeholders of the commitments they have made, to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. Mental disability being a much marginalized issue among the disabilities, voices were raised for inclusion and mainstreaming of mental disability in all development policies and programmes targeted at realizing the Millennium Development Goals. The programme was jointly organized by Ministry of Health and Population, WHO-Nepal and KOSHISH. The programme was supported by Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights-Nepal.



From Right: Matrika Prasad Devkota, Chairperson, KOSHISH; Bed Bhattarai, Director, NHRC; Dr Lin Aung, Representative, WHO-Nepal; Honourable Dr Chet Raj Panta, Member, NPC; Dr Prabin Mishra, Secretary, MoHP, Honourable Nayankala Thapa, Chairperson, NWC; Sonali Regmi, OHCHR-Nepal

- ❖ In the interaction programme, Bed Bhattarai, Director, National Human Rights Commission commented that there is discrimination in the education system. He mentioned that many of the rules and regulation of the Tribhuvan University discriminate the persons with disabilities. He stressed the need of Government, NGOs and other related stakeholders working in coordination so that the rights of persons with disabilities can be ensured. This clearly points to the necessity for the Government to work in proper co-ordination with NGOs and other concerned organizations which involves interaction and consultations. If we want to make our efforts result oriented that, we need to work out; while making policy or implementing law we should look for their efficacy.

- ❖ Honourable Nayankala Thapa, Chairperson, National Women Commission expressed her happiness to be seeing few people with physical disability in the public on their wheelchair. Focusing her attention on the day's issue she said she shared having recently seen a woman licking dirt lifting from the drain. Also there is the condition where people with mental disability are harassed with the blame of being witch and they undergo chain of social violence. She said the state is rather ignorant about it, and it's slow in taking action on it. However, if such seminars or campaigns as ours are continued, at least that day will come when general public will be aware that mental illness is ordinary as other conditions, going to mental hospital for check up is no embarrassing thing.
- ❖ Sonali Regmi, Officer-in-Charge, Discrimination, Economic; Social and Cultural Rights Team, OHCHR said on that day's interaction was we should talk the language of Rights and not Discrimination. Highlighting on Dec 10's slogan which was our agenda too, "Speak Up Stop Discrimination", she expressed herself on amendments *and domestication issues*.
- ❖ Dr. Prabin Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population agreed on the poor condition of mental health sector and scenario which he said is due to our own deep rooted ethics. It is actually a cross-cutting issue so it has to be taken care of as fast as possible.
- ❖ Dr. Lin Aung, Representative, WHO – Nepal presented a paper based on MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT: Targeting people with mental health conditions as a vulnerable group, a report launched by WHO at New York on September 16, 2010.



Dr Lin stressed on the employment of the people with mental disability as this would boost their self-esteem. They can then concentrate on many other important things and they can look forward for being competitive. However, they need support in their endeavor, he maintained.

LAUNCH OF REPORT: *From Right: Dr Lin Aung; Dr Chet Raj Panta; Dr Prabin Mishra*

- ❖ Matrika Prasad Devkota, Chairperson, KOSHISH, presented a paper on Mental Health and Mental Disability: The need to mainstreaming in government policies and programme and shared about mental health situation in the context of Nepal. He highlighted on stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental disability and called for ensuring their rights in accordance with United Nations Convention on Rights of the Persons with Disabilities-2006,

UNCRPD-2006. He also urged government authorities for effective implementation of National Mental Health Policy-1996

- ❖ Susmeera Aryal from KOSHISH expressed her viewpoint through a presentation entitled "An emerging development issue: Integrating mental health into all development efforts including MDGs." She urged the need to inclusion of mental health in development agenda in Millennium Development Goals. She also called for a renewed focus on mental health issues, through improved recognition of the links between development programmes and mental and emotional well-being, and the inclusion of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities to achieve development for all. Her presentation was based on policy analysis of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and WHO.

In the interaction round, curious participants put forth question regarding self-help support ; how to sustain them, long-term use of mental health services, alleviating condition of service users, awareness among the educated youths about the mental ailments and mental health and inclusion of mental health in the New Constitution.



Participants at the Interaction Programme

Conclusive Remarks: Dr. Chet Raj Panta, Honourable Member, National Planning Commission and also the chairperson of the programme in his conclusive remarks shared about how during the late 80s, things used to work. At that time the population of Nepal was 15 million of which 0.1million were having severe eye problem, but 93% were treatable in Nepal. His message was mental health problems are also treatable and manageable. Only related human resource is required and a body to mobilize the resources. He was hinting at a mental health division, was said to be set up according to National Mental Health Policy-1996. He commended those organizations and centers which are working with due humane love and hearty warmth towards alleviating the illness and addressing mental health issue. He welcomed all stakeholders for a thorough discussion and move forward with an action plan for national mental health programme.