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NEPAL

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*Statement on Agenda Item No. Item 4: Ensuring the right to nationality for persons belonging to minorities through facilitation of birth registration, naturalization and citizenship for stateless minorities.*

Thank you Madame Chair!

I am Kalpana B K from Nepal, representing Dalit community and OHCHR minority fellow, 2018.

Madame Chair,

In Nepal, the number of naturalized citizens is negligible and of stateless persons is very high. As per the article published in Discovery Society on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 only 13 persons have received naturalized citizenship during September 2015 to January 2017. As per IPS on 29 November 2018, "5.4 million individuals lack citizenship documentation in Nepal." Means they are stateless.

Most of these stateless people belong to Dalits, Madhesi, Indigenous Peoples, Muslims, and women, because of facing difficulties to produce various required documents as evidence, such as birth certificate, landownership certificate etc. Most of the minority people are unaware about the importance of citizenship, and even if they are aware, they either lack necessary documents or have no money.

Thus, they are deprived from education, unemployment, medical care, access to justice, enjoying reservation in representation, getting driving licenses, passports, bank accounts, voting rights, social security etc. We have many cases of death of a person without having citizenship in their entire life. Madam chair,

Thus, my recommendations to Nepalese government are:

1. To amend existing discriminatory citizenship law, other related laws and policies against minorities and women.
2. To simplify the process of obtaining citizenship certificates by stateless minorities;
3. To intensify awareness raising program and citizenship distribution through mobile team

Finally, as a fellow of OHCHR minority fellowship program, I would like to acknowledge this opportunity given by OHCHR.

Thank you Madam Chair!