



Women for Human Rights, single women group (WHR) commemorating 6th International Widows' Day "The last Women First"

Message



Statement by the U.N. Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon for the International Widow's Day 2016, June 23rd

There are some 259 million widows around the world, and nearly half are living in poverty. Widows are often stigmatized by their families

and communities. Many suffer discrimination based on age and gender. Some have lived lives marked by physical and sexual abuse.

Older widows often have few economic assets, after a lifetime of hard but unpaid work. Even in developed countries, the value of women's pensions can be some 40 per cent lower than men's. Younger widows face other challenges, as heads of households with childcare responsibilities and very limited economic opportunities.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with its pledge to leave no one behind has a particular resonance for widows, who are among the most marginalized and isolated. On International Widows' Day, let us pledge to make widows more visible in our societies, and to support them in living productive, equal and fulfilling lives.

- Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General



"Honoring those who have inspired, paved the way, and been ray of hope for countless widows across the country" Happy 6th International Widows' Day!
-Lily Thapa, Founder WHR

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Celebrating International Widows' Day



International Widows Day is a United Nations ratified day of action to address the "poverty and injustice faced by millions of widows and their dependents in many countries". The day takes place annually on 23 June.

WHR as only the organization fighting against injustice against widows is marking the day since the day's recognition. This year to develop the coordination mechanism among the district, regional and central



level network for the effective mobilization by acknowledging and felicitating the way forward sessions with district single women committee founders, executive board



members who have extended tireless support to keep up the movement of single women, WHR organized 2-day workshop. Showcasing the single women leaders of districts leading the single women movement and acknowledging their contribution and foster further team building in Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel on 23-24 June 2016.

During the event, there was different products made available by single women from all 75 districts, WHR Volunteer Batch-3 and Home based workers.

Inauguration Program Activities

The two days National Workshop on "The Last Women First" inaugurated by Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of , Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare Mr. Chandra Prakash Mainali. The session was chaired by Nirmala Dhungana, President of WHR. Honorable Nar Kumari Gurung (Disappearance and Investigation Commission), Honorable Surya Kiran Gurung (Truth and Reconciliation Commission), Ram Thapaliya (National Reconstruction Authority), Prakash Wasthi, (National Human Rights Commission), Country Head FES (FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG) Dev Raj Dahal, Sisilia Carter (OXFAM), Lily Thapa, Founder President of WHR and Kunda Sharma, General Secretary WHR.



Welcome Speech with objectives on the conference on the Last Woman First

The formal inauguration was followed by the welcome speech by Ms. Kunda Sharma, General Secretary, Briefing the data presenting the status of single women on the basis of literacy, Gender Based Violence, sexual exploitation in the Local,

Regional and National level.

Sharing the best practices by Single Women Survivors of violence, disaster, conflict and poverty

The interview session with different category of Single women served as a who have experienced multiple vulnerabilities but still have raised above all their woes and sorrows were selected to share motivational stories in the event Radio Journalist Chanda Bista, facilitated this sharing session.





Key

speeches



Lily Thapa Analysis of single women's Status Founder President of WHR

Ms. Lily Thapa, Founder President WHR, emphasized the definition of “The Last Women First” and that the same slogan has also been referred for single women in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). She also shared present global statistic on single women published by United Nations (UN)

that there are total 285 million single women in the world, among them 115 million fall below poverty line and 38 million conflict affected single women have no access to justice; these women are last.



Cecilia Keizer Oxfam Country Representative, Nepal

She emphasized on the hard works of single women need to be mainstreamed and appreciated in the policy-making level. She added that single women can contribute in the reconstruction and development of Nepal.

Honorable Mr. Chandra Prakash Mainali,



Deputy Minister and Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare

He mentioned his gratitude and appreciation towards the inspirational as well as exemplary work done by WHR and its' leading role in empowering and uplifting the issues of single women throughout Nepal. After the various political changes, the new constitution has been remarkable as it is termed to be women, Senior citizens, Children and differently able as well as minority friendly constitution, but yet there have been major responsibilities posed to fulfill these constitutional commitments.



Mr. Dev Raj Dahal Country Director FES, Nepal

He commemorated WHR and FES's long-term partnership from the very early phase of single women's movement and shared his best wishes. He brought an anecdote of Yog Maya - the first single women leader who fought with the tyranny of Rana rulers and revolted for preserving the rights of single women. He further stated that the history of single women has been written with tears

and is inseparable with the country's history.



Honorable Member, Mr. Prakash Wasti, National Human Rights Commission

He explained about Human Rights Commission (HRC) that has been performing as a constitutional body for preserving and uplifting the human rights of single women, marginalized and vulnerable whose human rights have been violated.



Joint secretary, Mr. Ram Prasad Thapaliya, National Reconstruction Authority

He appreciated the endeavors of the honored women in empowering single women. Now the major problem for earthquake victims is about opening a bank account which had been a lethargic process in the initial phases. He also committed those who are needy might contact their regional office of National Reconstruction Authority in their respective regions for additional assistance.



Honorable member, Nar Kumari Gurung Enforce Disappearance Commission

She expressed her appreciation and gratitude towards the struggle of single women movement and single women leaders. She admired WHR's contribution in changing many discriminatory laws and

dominating language used in national laws. She congratulated all the single women leaders for becoming able to replace them by respectful terms.



Honorable Chairperson, Mr. Surya Kiran Gurung, Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Honorable Chairperson, Surya Kiran Gurung congratulated the honored women for their continuous support and contribution to the single women's movement. He stated that the commission is committed to find out the facts and take decisions on the needs and desires of CAW. There were complaints that the relief distribution process was bias. The commission also submitted its report on 24th Magh to the government. The commission has the biggest challenge of ensuring relief, reconciliation and justice to the CAW.

Vote of Thanks



Nirmala Dhungana President of WHR

"We are single but not alone" was made the major motto of WHR in its initial phase. WHR lobbied for ending the discrimination and violence on the basis of marital status. The guests and chief guest commitments have proved that we are not alone yet. She stated that the honored women are the pillars of WHR that have been standing from the very early phase. Even if the women have been separated from their husband they cannot be separated from the country, state and the society. She thanked all the

guests and chief guests, representatives of commissions and ministries, partner organizations, the media personals, Staff College for providing space for the program, the dedicated staffs and volunteers of WHR and Chhahari services for delicious lunch.

Launching of Report on Disaster



Honorable chief guest , Oxfam representative, Cecilia Keizer and single women who lost her husband earthquake launched the report that recommendations for National and other commissions. The report is expected to be one of the major guidelines in the policy making level which is the first assessment and analysis report of single women's status after the earthquake.

Nepal's Country one of the representative and property in the includes the Reconstruction Authority

Honoring Single women leaders



During the program, 24 single women leaders and activist from various districts were appreciated and honored for their contributions in successfully taking forth the issues of single women from the grass root to national and international level. 24 women were felicitated by handing over letter of acknowledgement and shawl by the honorable chief guest and the founder president of WHR

Open Market

The main attraction of the event was open market set to display popular locally produced goods and items prepared by single women from the five development regions. Along with the single women members Single Women Entrepreneurs' Group (SWEG), home based workers alliance and network members, earthquake affected women and WHR's Volunteer team also participated in the open market. Products such as crystal products, silver products, pickles, key rings, cookies, vegetables, baby blankets, bead's items, necklace, laptop bags, kurti items were displayed. WHR's volunteer team also set the stalls with edible items and set the stall with an aim to donate the collected amount to Opportunity Fund.



Second Session

Region wise Group Introduction



Ice Breaking Session

There was an introductory session with all the participants of the workshop that represented various regions.. Senior Program Manager, WHR Sumeera Shrestha and Communication Officer, WHR Uma Thapa facilitated the icebreaker session

Expression of Feelings and thoughts from the group

Furthermore, there was a collection of feelings, thoughts and suggestions from the participants by writing it in zopp card that was facilitated by Rajin Rayamajhi, Nija Silwal and Pramila Tajhiya. The expressions were collected with an aim of wider sharing and fulfilling the gaps that could be met by center office WHR.

Thematic Group Work and Discussion

After the icebreaking session, the participants were then divided into five groups to discuss solutions to the issues that are faced by single women groups in the present scenario. This session of thematic group Nirmala Dhungana, President of WHR chaired work and discussion. Group one was facilitated by Reshma Thapa, Program Manager, Nija Silwal, Regional Coordinator and Bishnu Maya Pandey, Board Member. Group two was facilitated by Rajin Rayamajhi, Legal Program Manager Dikshya Singh Rathaur, Program Officer and Durga Neupane, Board Member. Group three was facilitated by Usha Rawat, Chitra Raj Joshi, Finance Manager and Ek Maya B. K, Board member. Group four by Sumeera Shrestha, Senior Program Manager Rojvin Pradhan, Human Resource and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Bimala Prajuli, Board Member and Group five was facilitated by Upasana Rana, Program Manager, Ved Awasti, Far Western Regional Officer and Chandrika Bhattarai, Former President.



Summary of the program

Kunda Sharma, General Secretary WHR

She summarized about the whole day workshop beginning with the inauguration session, honoring of the single women leaders “Agents of Change”, the important speeches and useful information delivered by the chief guest and other honorable guests, theme-wise group division and group tasks, learning of techniques to solve these problems and sharing of experiences. She also requested the participants to note the things that they missed to express in first day’s session can share it in the next day session, and she ended the program with information that the next day session will begin at 9:00 am.



Day 2: 24th June, 2016

First Session

Panel Discussion



Honorable Member Dr. Madhavi Bhatta, Truth and Reconciliation Committee

Dr. Madhavi Bhatta thanked all the participants and the organization for conducting such useful program. She started with brief justification on the formation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission with its objectives. The armed conflict between the former

Maoists and the government of Nepal started in 1996 till 2006 and focused on the main objective of the commission is to find the conflict-affected victims and provide them essential relief but the commission had to face many controversies due to the political influence.

Radhika Aryal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW)

The government of Nepal had planned and formulated many policies and projects especially for the progress of single women, to sustain their livelihood, education, health and many other facilities. There is special provision for single women to take loan for self-employment. Single Women Emergency fund is focused on economic support for the single women and this fund can be utilized by women belonging to five different categories.

Single women security fund provision

Activities	Amount
To conduct self-employment program.	Rs. 15,000
To provide income generating/skill development training to Single women	Rs. 6,000
Medicinal purpose	Rs 5,000-1000
For relief and reconstruction	Rs. 5,000
Legal support	Rs. 7,500
To conduct Awareness Program	Rs. 50,000

Section Officer, Mr. Prakash Devkota, National Reconstruction Authority (NRA)

He delivered a message that NRA had started its program in 31 districts, among them 14 districts are highly affected districts where women are the most targeted groups. NRA will also be co-coordinating with other government agencies to uplift the conditions of women. He further added 50% of women are directly affected by the devastating earthquakes and among them 26 % are female-headed household. Since the women whose husbands have gone abroad are also included in the category of female-headed households, it is unfair for the actual female headed households, so a distinction between the two is required. He also accepted that the flow of information is not systematic and many districts had not been well informed about the fund.

Regional Updates

The regional representatives presented the progress of their respective regions. The election in five development regions has been held and a new committee is formed.

The Chairpersons of 5 Development Regions are:

Region	Chairperson Name	
Eastern Development Region	Dipa Acharya	
Central Development Region	Mana Maya Shakya	
Western Development Region	Mina Panthi	
Mid Western Development Region	Shova Bista	
Far-western Development Region	Tikeswori Hamal	

Closing Session

Founder WHR Lily Thapa, summarized the whole session of the workshop. She thanked all the participants for their active participation in the workshop. She illustrated about the purpose of the two-day workshop on the occasion of 6th International Widow's day. The main objective of this workshop was to deliver the information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, National Reconstruction Authority and about the Emergency Fund by Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare and services provided by these commissions, and suggestions to be provided to these commissions through the close coordination overseen by WHR for the rights of single women and conflict-affected women. Additionally, she reminded about the registration of the groups in the District Development Office and forming groups and membership cards which are crucial part of the organization

Conclusion

The conclusion of the conference marked the beginning of a new era for the widows' movement in Nepal. During the conference, best practices were established for mobilizing widows to demand policy changes and mainstreaming of widows' issues at the local, regional, national and governmental levels. The participants were updated with the policies and laws formulated by government and were provided with the opportunity to know more about the working modules and progress of TRC, HRC, NRA, DIC and other government agencies. Moreover, the conference also facilitated in bridging the gaps between the center and the region, region and the district committee and district committees and the single women groups and learns from one another's sharing and experiences. Finally, the workshop worked as a platform for forming a pressure group of single women and conflict-affected women to formulate favorable laws and policies that bring "The Last Women First".

PHOTO GALLERY



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