



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
KATHMANDU**

14 March 2011

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS SUPPORT
FOR NEPAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

The Australian Government will strengthen its cooperation with Nepal on human rights issues through its Human Rights Grants Scheme. The Geneva-based International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) has been awarded funding of AUD 120,000 for a project focused on challenges faced by human rights defenders in South Asia. Advocacy Forum Nepal and INFORM Sri Lanka will be partners in 2011.

The Human Rights Grants Scheme operates in developing countries to promote and protect human rights. In 2011, the scheme is funding 33 projects globally to the value of AUD 3 million.

Advocacy Forum Nepal aims to combat the culture of impunity by promoting the rule of law. It seeks to achieve this through capacity development of the victims, legal aid and high-level policy advocacy. This is undertaken to create the legal and policy frameworks necessary for the fair and effective delivery of justice.

The Australian Government's support for this program and its approach to Nepal's Universal Periodic Review in February in Geneva underscore Australia's commitment to promote human rights in Nepal.

Australia remains concerned that critical aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Accord remain incomplete despite political parties' commitments to act. Human rights mechanisms, such as the Commission of Inquiry on Disappearances and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, are still not in place. Australia is also concerned that human rights defenders in Nepal are frequently threatened by those accused of human rights abuses. The Australian Government calls on the political parties to renounce violence; respect the work of human rights defenders and ensure they are free to work without intimidation; end impunity; and work together for a lasting peace in respect of the rule of law.

- **ENDS**