

**Speech for Human Rights Day Function, December 10, 2024 by
Acting Chairperson, NHRC, India**

Hon'ble President of India, Esteemed Members of the Commission, Present and former Judges of the Supreme Court, Judges of the High Court of Delhi, Chairpersons and Members of Tribunals, National Commissions and State Commissions, Officers of the Central and State Governments, Office Bearer and Representatives of the UN Organizations, Diplomats, Ld. Members of the Bar, Media Persons, Civil Society Members, Distinguished Invitees, Dear Students, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my privilege to welcome you all to the celebration of Human Rights Day 2024. On behalf of the National Human Rights Commission, I extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each one of you on this significant occasion. Human Rights Day serves as a powerful reminder of the fundamental rights inherent to every individual, irrespective of their identity or background. These include the rights to freedom,

equality, education, and the dignity of life principles that form the bedrock of a fair and just society. The theme for this year, "*Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now*," underscores the vital role human rights play in empowering individuals and communities to shape a brighter and more equitable future. It calls for collective action to ensure these rights are not just ideals but tangible realities for all.

Human Rights Day serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring principles of equality, justice, freedom, and the fundamental respect for human rights. The National Human Rights Commission remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the human rights of all individuals across India. At the core of Hindu philosophy lies the concept of *Dharma*, representing righteousness and moral duty, which forms the foundation for human rights. Further, the principle of *Ahimsa*, or non-violence, calls for treating all living beings with kindness and respect, further strengthening the moral underpinnings of human dignity.

Since its establishment on October 12, 1993, the NHRC has dedicated itself to the protection of basic rights and the realization of social, economic, and political justice for every individual in our nation.

Globally, we are witnessing an escalation in conflicts, leading to the displacement of millions and creating severe humanitarian crises. The refugee crisis, born out of these conflicts, presents another critical challenge. Additionally, climate change continues to threaten food security, access to clean water, and safe living conditions, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations, including indigenous communities and low-income families.

In response to these growing challenges, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken proactive steps. Following a 1997 Supreme Court mandate, we have been closely monitoring mental health hospitals to ensure that these institutions uphold the dignity and rights of individuals with mental health conditions. In this era of rapid change and complex social dynamics, the role of the NHRC has never been more critical. We remain committed to advocating for the rights of

marginalized communities, striving to build a society where everyone can enjoy their fundamental freedoms, free from fear or discrimination.

In the past two years, from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2024, the NHRC has registered 190,924 cases and disposed of 181,019 cases, demonstrating our active involvement in addressing human rights violations, adopting various instrumentalities like complaint management, spot visits/inquiries and suo-motu cognizance. The Commission takes systemic measures, organizes open house discussions, and holds seminars and meetings of core groups with different stakeholders. Based on the same, Advisories are finalized and issued with actionable points exercising the powers under Sec.12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the IGNFA, the Commission hosted a residential capacity-building program on human rights for senior Indian Forest Service officers in Dehradun in this year. We also organized several sensitization programs for police officials, reinforcing the importance of human rights awareness in law enforcement.

In recent years, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India has actively advanced human rights through significant national and international initiatives. At home, the NHRC has remained committed to improving living conditions for vulnerable populations, reflecting its proactive approach to promoting and protecting human rights both nationally and globally.

We observe Human Rights Day 2024, let us reflect on the significant strides we have made in advocating for and protecting human rights globally. Together, let us strive for a future where human rights are not just ideals but lived realities for every individual. By embracing our shared responsibilities and advocating for the rights of all, we can contribute to a more just and equitable world. Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina.

Thank you, and Jai Hind!