An advocacy meeting on, “Analysis and Application of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012”, held at Hotel Lake Castle, Dhaka Bangladesh on 26th January, 2019 jointly organised by SAARCLAW and Solidarity Center, Bangladesh. The Chief guest of the program was Director General, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). The program was attended by Mr. Muhammad Mohsen Rashid, Secretary General, SAARCLAW, Barrister Lutfun Kadir and many other lawyers, trade union leaders and migrant rights activists.

Mr. Salim Reza, in his speech, said the government of Bangladesh has a zero-tolerance policy to combat trafficking. SAARCLAW Secretary General Muhammad Mohsen Rashid stressed the need for creating awareness to prevent trafficking. Barrister Lutfun Kadir made a presentation on “Explanation of Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012”. As a panel discussant, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers’ Association President Advocate Fowzia Karim Feroze said investigation of the cases related to trafficking was not being done on time as stipulated in the law. She added, “the delay is prolonging the sufferings of the victims.”

Christopher K Johnson, Country Program Director, Solidarity Center, Dr. Lily Gomes, Senior Program Officer, Solidarity Center, Trade Union Leader Nazma Akter, Jasiya Khatoon, Director, WARBE Development Foundation and Lily Jahan, Chairman, BOMSA and Sumaiya Islam, Director, BOMSA also spoke at the meeting.

The program focused on urging the government to groom skilled manpower by providing the workers with quality training.
to vote should also be ensured in State and Local Level Elections otherwise issues like discrimination and inequality could be raised. Voters’ Right to be informed shall also be ensured. All these things should be taken into consideration while making the law.

Ms. Radhika Regmi, Deputy Director, International foundation for Electoral System added that Election should be participatory, transparent, impartial and independent and there is a possibility for the implementation of external voting system in Nepal. Mr. Madhu Regmi, Former Secretary of Election Commission of Nepal said that until and unless political parties are fully committed to adopt new modes of electoral voting, it seems very challenging and impossible for external voting to be functional.

Ms. Ila Sharma, Former Commissioner, National Election Commission, Nepal also said that if people living outside their country are provided with external voting rights then people in Nepal living in different places away from where they attained their voter’s identity card should also be allowed to vote.

Mr. Hari Phuyal, Former Attorney General of Nepal made a Paper Presentation on “Opportunities & Challenges in ensuring External Voting”. He said that the judgment by the Supreme Court should be taken as a stepping stone for further development. The challenges for external voting could be legal framework; logistic arrangement; financial and bureaucratic arrangements; capacity building. Some follow up steps that could be taken up are, a comparative research on modalities of external voting; discourse on external voting among civil society, political parties and Nepalese diaspora; field visit/bilateral discussions with other countries; working on legislative aspect in Nepal; inter-ministerial collaboration/discussion and an active role of Election Commission.

There are a few areas of sensitivities on implementing external voting like, political consensus in home country; political sensitivity in destination countries and security concerns.

There are several challenges while implementing external voting rights. However, respecting the suffrage rights and democratic principles we need to overcome the challenges and implement the decision given by the Supreme Court.
Hon’ble Justice Cholendra Rana was sworn in as the 29th Chief Justice, Supreme Court. The Rt. Hon’ble President H.E. Bidya Devi Bhandari administered oath to new Chief Justice in Kathmandu.

Hon’ble Justice Asif Saeed Khosa was sworn in as the 26th Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan. The new chief justice was sworn in by President of Pakistan Hon’ble Arif Alvi at a ceremony.

Hon’ble President Maithripala Sirisena appointed AG Jayantha Jayasuriya as new Chief Justice. Hon’ble Justice Jayasuriya took his oaths before President Sirisena at the President’s Office.

NEW CHIEF JUSTICES IN SOUTH ASIA

Hon’ble Justice Cholendra Rana was sworn in as the 29th Chief Justice, Supreme Court. The Rt. Hon’ble President H.E. Bidya Devi Bhandari administered oath to new Chief Justice in Kathmandu.

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NEWLY ELECTED COUNTRY CHAPTER’S EXCO 2019/2020

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The report examines the major reasons why childhood comes to an early end, and find significantly fewer children suffering ill-health, malnutrition, exclusion from education, child labor, child marriage, early pregnancy and violent death. In the year 2000, an estimated 970 million children were robbed of their childhoods due to these causes. That number today has been reduced to 690 million—meaning at least 280 million children are better off today than they would have been two decades ago.

A comparison of End of Childhood Index scores finds the overall situation for children has improved in 173 out of 176 countries since 2000. This is welcome news – and it shows that investments and policies are working to lift up many of our children. Tremendous progress for children is taking place in some of the poorest countries in the world, providing ever increasing evidence that development work is paying huge dividends in countries where needs are greatest. Drilling down to look at the individual indicators in the index, we find countries have made impressive progress in fulfilling children’s rights by reducing under-5 mortality. Countries have also made substantial progress in enrolling children in school and reducing malnutrition, child labor and child marriage. Progress in these areas has resulted in millions fewer children missing out on childhood.

However, the world has made less progress in reducing adolescent births and child homicide, and there has been no progress at all in reducing the number of children living in areas of violence and conflict. In fact, the number of children living in war zones or forced to flee their homes due to conflict has skyrocketed since 2000.

Today, 1 child in 4 is being denied the right to a childhood – a time of life that should be safe for growing, learning and playing. These stolen childhoods are increasingly concentrated in the world’s conflict zones.

As noted above, of the eight indicators we examine, displacement due to conflict is the only one that is on the rise. There are 30.5 million more forcibly displaced people now than there were in 2000, an 80 percent increase. Finding ways to fulfill children’s health, education and protection rights in conflict zones is central to the challenge of ensuring every child has the childhood they deserve.

Source: https://campaigns.savethechildren.net/global-childhood-report/
In South Asia, **Bhutan** achieved a 194-point increase, rising from 617 to 811, mostly by getting more children into school. **Afghanistan** also made excellent progress, increasing its score 185 points, from 411 to 596. **Bangladesh**’s score rose 153 points, from 575 to 728, primarily because of improvements in child survival. **Nepal**’s score is up 142 points, from 543 to 685, due mostly to decreases in mortality, malnutrition and teen births. And **India**’s score is up 137 points, from 632 to 769, largely because of improvements in child health and survival. Only three countries in the would has achieved greater progress out which one is **Maldives**, from 774 to 917. **Pakistan** has a point increase of 86 and Sri Lanka has 48 rising from 867 to 915.

### WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX, 2019

The **press freedom index** is an annual ranking of countries compiled and published by Reporters Without Borders based upon the organisation’s own assessment of the countries' press freedom records in the previous year. It intends to reflect the degree of freedom that journalists, news organisations, and netizens have in each country, and the efforts made by authorities to respect this freedom. In South Asia, the **Bhutan** ranks on the top with global score 29.81 followed by **Maldives** with 32.16. **Nepal** is on the 3rd position with the score of 33.40. Afghanistan and Sri Lanka falls on 4th and 5th position with the global score of 36.55 and 39.61 respectively while India and Pakistan are on 6th and 7th position with a difference of score of 0.16 totaling to 45.67 and 45.83 respectively. Bangladesh holds the last position in the South Asia Region with a score of 50.74.
UPCOMING CONFERENCE
of SAARCLAW

SAARCLAW is organizing 12th SAARC Chief Justices and 15th SAARCLAW Conference from 11th to 13th October, 2019 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The theme of the conference is, “Facing the challenges of Changing times”.

For more information:
Email: saarclaw2019.info@gmail.com
sthkripa@gmail.com
Contact number:
+9221-35867041-3 (Karachi)
+977-9841666533 (Kathmandu)

LINKS TO IMPORTANT NEWS

BANGLADESH

1. Government plans to establish Directorate of Children this year

2. Nepal, Bangladesh sign Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

INDIA

1. Mobile apps to facilitate pro bono legal service launched

2. Compulsory registration of NRI marriages for protection of women

NEPAL

1. Government aims to end child marriage
https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/government-aims-to-end-child-marriage/

Sri Lanka

1. Sri Lanka has the potential to reach “zero” of child labour
http://www.dailynews.lk/2019/04/12/local/183079/sri-lanka-has-potential-reach-%E2%80%9Czero%E2%80%9D-child-labour

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