



5th LAWASIA International Human Rights Conference 2025 Kathmandu 15-17 February 2025

Namaskar!

Greetings from LAWASIA.

As President of LAWASIA, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 5th LAWASIA International Human Rights Conference in Kathmandu.

Hosted by the Nepal Bar Association, the Kathmandu conference, builds on the success of LAWASIA's last Human Rights Conference held in Fukuoka, Japan in September 2023.

Set amidst the breathtaking Himalayas, Nepal is a young federal republic home to over 31 million people. It has a rich history extending back in time to the Buddha and an earlier epoch, harking back to the Vedic period.

LAWASIA's ties with Nepal run deep. LAWASIA's inaugural conference in 1966 was attended by delegates from the Nepal Bar Association, marking the beginning of a long-standing relationship.

In 2005, at the invitation of Senior Advocate Bishwa Kant Mainali, LAWASIA undertook an observer mission to Nepal during a period of political upheaval. This mission underscored our shared commitment to upholding the rule of law and supporting the Nepal Bar Association's efforts to defend civil liberties amidst adversity.

Nepal's judiciary and independent Bar continue to provide path-breaking judgments in the fields of human rights, environment, good governance and public law.

Our battles in India for the recognition of rights of transgender persons and for decriminalizing homo-sexual conduct, were inspired by the progressive judicial approach in Nepal.

More recently, the Nepal judiciary prompted by strong advocacy by the Bar continues to render progressive rulings on same sex unions; climate change, and other decisions that lean towards making Nepal a more just, inclusive and equitable society.

I congratulate the Nepal Bar Association and its energetic leadership for creating such a rich and diverse programme covering themes drawn from human rights, the environment and the rights of indigenous communities.

Nepal has incredibly rich offerings with unsurpassed natural beauty and a rich and diverse culture. Remember to choose wisely as the Nepali poet and Mahakavi -- Laxmi Prasad Devkota reminds us in 'Yatri':

Which temple will you go, pilgrim?

Which temple will you visit, pilgrim?

I look forward to seeing you soon in Kathmandu and do set apart a few days for a trek across high hills.

Dhanyabaad!



Shyam Divan
President, LAWASIA