



Women Lawyers Joining Hands

Women lawyers in Nepal exchange professional experience with peers from Australia, Canada and U.S.

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PRESS RELEASE

Sixty women lawyers completed a six-day intensive training course, organized by Women Lawyers Joining Hands (WLJH) and the Nepal Bar Association (NBA), and supported by international law firms - DLA Piper and Symes Street and Millard, and by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The training is part of a larger long-term initiative of WLJH and NBA to provide opportunities for Nepali women lawyers for professional development and high quality training.

*Our organization believes that female and male lawyers should be treated equally and have the same opportunities to enter leadership positions in the legal profession, government, state institutions, and judicial bodies, as prescribed in the Constitution – said **Sheri Meyerhoffer, the co-founder of WLJH**. Unfortunately, today women make up less than 10 per cent of the legal profession in Nepal and we are committed to support our Nepali colleagues in their efforts to achieve equality – added Meyerhoffer.*

Twenty-eight top lawyer trainers from Australia, Canada, U.S. and Nepal developed and delivered the training agenda. It was tailored to the needs and requests of the participants and covered advocacy skills focused on Nepal's constitutional equality rights, international arbitration, intellectual property, and corporate and commercial law. The agenda also included sessions on principles of professional responsibility and legal ethics.

*This is rare opportunity for women members of the NBA to get top quality training delivered by experienced national and international lawyer trainers, build relationships and expand their professional networks – said **Saroj Ghimire National Trainer and Member-Secretary of Committee on International Bar Relations and Professional Development at the NBA**.*

*I signed up for this intensive training to get out of my comfort zone and learn about legal topics I haven't explored enough. I see my future practicing law and every opportunity to learn and grow is precious. I also enjoy the interactions with more experienced colleagues – said **Swechhya Sangroula, basic course participant**.*

This is the second phase of the Women Lawyers Skills Enhancement Training. WLJH and NBA launched the first training in 2015 and it benefited 30 women lawyers. This year, the 2015 group enrolled in advanced six-day course. In addition, a new batch of 30 participants joined them to complete the basic course programme, largely based on the 2015 curriculum.



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*I participated in the 2015 training organized by WLJH and NBA and it changed my professional career. I worked for Municipal Association of Nepal before, but after the training I gained the confidence to pursue a career in commercial law and in the future I would also like to engage in advocacy for equality rights – said **Pushpa Tiwari, advanced course participant.***

In addition to discussions about legal topics, the agenda of the training provoked conversations about challenges specific to women in the legal profession in Nepal and elsewhere in the world. Participants agreed that there is a need to have more women lawyers engaging in pro bono work, particularly in the area of women's rights, to litigate cases that advocate for laws and policies to be gender friendly and fair. The trainers also shared their practice from around the world in effective ways of advocating for development and enforcement of equality laws.

*In Canada, where I practice law, women lawyers also face barriers practicing law. We are here to share our experiences and to assist Nepali women lawyers to develop strategies to ensure their full participation in the legal profession. It is time to give back – said **Beth Symes, international trainer from Symes Street and Millard.***

Women Lawyers Joining Hands WLJH's mission is to educate, train, coach, and mentor women lawyers in Nepal and help them access scholarships, bursaries, awards, and other forms of financial assistance, which is especially important in the early years of legal career. The organization also facilitates mentorship programmes for women lawyers and supports development of professional networks, often initiated during trainings like this one.

International lawyer trainers from DLA Piper and Symes Street and Millard have been engaged in the initiative since the beginning. They developed the training curriculum and delivered the sessions entirely on pro bono basis.

*The energy and talent of the women lawyers in Nepal is truly inspiring. I am looking forward to working with them in the future and witnessing their success as legal professionals and advocates for equality – said **Sarah Mellowes, international trainer from DLA Piper.***

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For more information about the activities of Women Lawyers Joining Hands visit:
<http://www.wljh.org>