

**Human Rights in Asia Conference: South Asia in Focus**  
**5<sup>th</sup> June 2014**  
**University of Essex**  
**Final Report**



**Funded by**



## Introduction to the Conference



Affirming the universality and indivisibility of human rights and aiming to discuss Asian problems, practices and perspectives in relation to human rights, the Human Rights in Asia conference has been annually organized by a team of LLM and MA students of Law School with the support of Essex Human Rights Centre since 2009. The conference has become a platform to exchange ideas regarding a wide range of issues in relation to human rights in Asia including optimistic, pessimistic and critical perspectives.

In continuation of the trend, the University of Essex this year (2014), held a one-day conference to discuss a number of issues concerning human rights in Asia, specifically focusing on South Asian region. The conference focused on issues such as right to health in India, girls' education in Afghanistan,

human rights and conflict in Sri Lanka, death penalty for drug crimes in Pakistan and other issues relevant to the region. The discussions were led by committed and experienced professionals of each field including professors, lawyers, activists and students. The discussions were lively and focused on academically under-represented issues. They encouraged the exchange of views and gave international perspectives on human rights debates in Asia. These debates are often linked to rather sensitive political issues connected to the history and the current distribution of power in the region.

## Morning Session

### Welcome speech by Ms. Rukamanee Mahajan



Human Rights in Asia Conference started off with a short welcome speech by the Chair of the conference Ms. Rukamanee Maharajan, an LLM student from Nepal. She briefly introduced the guests and explained the agenda of the conference. Following her warm welcome speech was a brief overview of previous Human Rights in Asia Conferences by Dr Sanae Fujita, a member of the School of Law/Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex.

## **Brief Overview of Human Rights in Asia by Dr. Sanae Fujita**

Dr. Sanae Fujita started the overview by highlighting the size of the Asian population and how human rights issues in Asia have been ignored by academic institutions. She pointed out the need to have a Human Rights in Asia Conference to raise awareness of human rights in Asia within the University of Essex community. The idea of having a conference on human rights in Asia was first raised by a number of students from countries such as Japan and Indonesia, six years ago. The focus of these conferences, according to her, varied on an annual basis and were influenced by the degree of importance of issues. Since then, this initiative has received support and has even resulted in the allocation of a graduate teaching module. Dr. Fujita expressed the hope that this student-led event will continue in the coming years.



## **Professor Sir Nigel Rodley - Keynote speaker**



Sir Nigel, a distinguished professor of Law School and expert in the field of human rights, shared his insights and experiences of work in several Asian countries, particularly during his various UN fact-finding missions. He recounted the memories of his first trip that took place in 1992 under the official UK mission to China, with the purpose of investigating human rights situations violations, especially the conditions of prisons in different prisons. According to him, it was a high-level mission involving meetings with a number of Chinese authorities. However, in his opinion, it was difficult for his team to conduct conclusive research on

human rights violations, as field visits and direct interviews with prisoners were not permitted by authorities. Therefore, in order for his team to have an informed dialogue with the authorities, they had to rely on outside sources, including research reports prepared by Amnesty International.

Sir Nigel then continued the discussion by sharing his experience as UN Special Rapporteur against torture to Pakistan in 1996. According to him, a team of experts including him visited that country to investigate the existence of alleged secret detention facilities setup in residential areas. Despite the challenges, his team succeeded to identify a number of facilities and make the authorities confess the

existence of such secret facilities, said Sir Nigel. The success of the trip, in his opinion, was the conduct of interviews by his team members with individual prisoners.

Moreover, Sr Nigel also alluded to his trip to Sri Lanka that took place at a time when the killing of political figures had begun after the breakdown of the peace agreement in 2004. The Sri Lankan authorities were pressured by the international community to set up some sort of international inquiry into such gross human rights violations. Instead they established a national committee of inquiry monitored by an international group. Sr Nigel was part of the international group.



His most recent mission was to Bahrain which was politically destabilized at the time resulting in arbitrary arrests and detention, alleged torture and summary killings, and people being sacked from their jobs etc. Civilians had lost trust and confidence in the authorities. Consequently, the national inquiry was set up consisting of members from the international community – Sir Nigel was part of it. The commission was mandated to carry out an investigation and produce a report within four months. Despite a number of limitations and challenges, the commission was able to finalise a report which was well accepted by all sides,

including the King.

### **Girls' Education in Afghanistan by Ms. Horia Mossadiq**



The session on girls' education in Afghanistan was moderated by Mr. Abdul Halim Achakzai and delivered by Horia Mossadiq from Amnesty international. Ms. Mossadiq described in detail the condition of women in Afghanistan throughout different periods of Afghan history. She explained the rights which the Afghan women enjoyed for decades under the rule of King Zahir Shah (1914 – 2007), who ruled the country for forty years (1932 – 1972). According to Ms. Mossadiq, in that period, women enjoyed many liberties including right to vote, education, work and participation in the political process. However, everything changed when the Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan and a brutal and prolonged campaign against them began by Mujahedeen. The Mujahedeen, in her opinion, promoted an extreme

ideology that opposed the enjoyment of many rights by women, including right to education. Thus, many girls' schools were destroyed and women attending universities were attacked and killed.

The situation changed from bad to worse when the Mujahedeen (1992) and later on the Taliban (1996) took power in the country. During this period women were absolutely banned from attending schools or universities and their appearance in public was strictly limited. "As a result, millions of girls were deprived of their right to education and grew up illiterate", said Ms. Mossadiq. Intimidation and deprivation of women and girls finally ended when the Taliban regime was toppled by the international community, led by the United States. Since 2001, millions of girls have been exercising their right to education and have gradually taken steps to restore their position in the society. However, despite these achievements, a number of challenges such as insecurity, ancient customs, poverty and other factors still pose serious threats to girls' enjoyment of right to education. Moreover, withdrawal of international troops, and decline in aid, have also concerned woman's rights activists in Afghanistan. Ms Mossadiq ended her speech by emphasizing that the international community should not ignore the achievements gained in the field of women rights in the last decade and must continue to support woman's liberties in the coming years.

### **Ms. Julie Hannah and Mr. Dan Dolan on the Death Penalty for Drug Offences in Pakistan: International Counter-Narcotics Aid and Challenges to Human Rights**

This session was moderated by Ms. Sumina Subba, an MA Human Rights student, University of Essex. Ms. Julie Hannah the Projects Director International Centre on Human Rights and Drug Policy, School of Law and Human Rights Centre, University of Essex began with an overview of the legal framework in place to address capital punishment for drug crimes, including international human rights and drug control instruments.

majority of states for drugs offences that some countries their domestic crimes are in law. The practice of offences is observed Pakistan was used highlight the



According to her, the vast with capital punishment are in Asia. She explained have capital drug crimes in legislation and how these violation of international death penalty for drugs in over 32 countries. as a case example to practice and the

contribution of international donors that encourages the practice. It was pointed out that capital drug crime legislation rose from 1985 to 2007 although the UN Human Rights Committee definitively says that the capital punishment for drug crimes is in violation of article 6 (2) of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). After discussing the narcotic control at the international level, she concluded by making some remarks on how States are responding to drug control obligations through aid for enforcement operations in States with dubious human rights records, including Pakistan, and how their actions may give rise to their complicity in the violation of international law.

Following her was Mr. Dan Dolan from **Repreive** who introduced the organization that has been actively working on advocacy and litigation in relation to death penalty. He highlighted its 'Stop Aid for Execution' campaign which aims to abolish the Death Penalty for drug offenders in countries, such as Iran and Pakistan, receiving counter-narcotics aid from European governments. According to him, there are many countries which use the financial assistance they are receiving to prosecute drug offenders. As an example, he demonstrated that financial support from France for counter-narcotics efforts in Iran contribute in arresting more drug offenders and leading them to execution. Likewise, UK has funded Pakistan where more than 9000 people languish on death row.

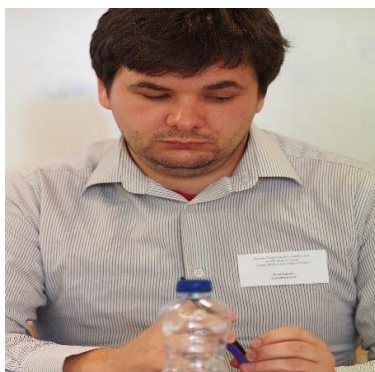


### **Afternoon Session**

#### **Conflicts and human rights in Sri Lanka by Ms. Nirmala Rajasingam and Mr. Fred Craver**



Conflicts and Human Rights in Sri Lanka session was moderated by Mr. Halil Kosumi, a LLM student of the University of Essex. Ms. Nirmala Rajasingam is a member of the steering committee of the Sri Lanka Democracy Forum (SLDF), an international network of progressive diaspora voices. With a short introduction about the geographical location of the specific conflict zone of the country, she discussed two major violent incidents that broke out in the region. Since independence, the country's politics has been dominated by the majority nationalist Buddhists. She also said that human rights work of NGOs and UN has been ineffective on the ground.



Afterwards, Mr. Fred Craver, the Campaign Director of Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice very briefly made a few points. Sri Lanka is the only country without military interruption in the democratic process. There has never been a military coup in Sri Lanka and it is generally seen that the military is very subservient to the civilian regime. However, Fred's concern is that there has been a change and recently an internal military coup is occurring. He pointed to the military occupation in the North of the country and he also highlighted the growth of the military.

## Perspectives on Human Rights in Asia

### Realization of Human Rights in Nepal: Personal Outlook on the Present and Past

Ms. Tara Van Ho was the moderator of the Perspectives on Human Rights in Asia session in which the perspectives of two Human Rights students of Essex, Ms. Asmita from Nepal and Ms. Yoshiko from Japan, were presented. Asmita opened her presentation with an introduction of how human rights were perceived in Nepal in the past. Then she continued her broad outlook on the present human rights issues



of her country ranging from issues of how the political system was dominated by the Caste system, positive discrimination in different fields such as education and parliament, the legal recognition of same-sex marriage and other LGTB rights, as well as some other recent improvements in the field. Impunity is one of the major issues which attracts a lot of media attention. The people have lost trust in courts. According to her, this is much due to practical experiences such as armed conflicts and monarchical misadministration that

human rights issues were widely discussed among the general public in the country. However, the general public is not informed about the international human rights system. In conclusion, she felt doubtful that international human rights system would be workable within the region and commented that the issues in South Asia region needs special attention and approach due to its uniqueness.

### Sex Industry in Thailand – Ms. Yoshiko Sugita (Japan)

The sex industry in Thailand has been maintaining its huge scale since 1990s, involving not only Thai population but also foreigners, Ms. Sugita started to explain. However, there are many human rights issues involving sex workers, such as sexually transmitted diseases, violence by clients and employers, exploitation from the police, and difficult life after their employment. Although criminalization of prostitution, introduced in 1960, first seemed to be a right way, because the government did not implement the law, the situation got worse; sex workers lost legal protection from human rights violations. Now there is a movement for the decriminalization of prostitution.



## Right to Health in South Asia by Professor Paul Hunt

The moderator for this session was Dr. Sanae Fujita. By way of context, Professor Paul Hunt highlighted the region's rising nationalism, expanding middle class, increasing demand for natural resources, and diminishing natural resources. Historically, such a 'cocktail' has generated conflict. Human rights breaches are sometimes a warning that a society or region may be approaching a period of conflict. He also talked about the right to health in India. In India, the rate of maternal death is very high (in the region of 300/100,000 births). The reasons include: a yawning gulf between policies and urgent focused implementation; buck-passing between one authority and another; and the media is largely silent on this topic. We should look beyond the superficial endorsement of human rights by governments. Human rights can shape health policies. There is evidence that human rights-shaped health interventions contribute to health gains for women and children.



## Closing Remarks by Professor Noam Lubell (Head of Human Rights Department)



Professor Noam Lubell remarked that all the participants would have benefited from this conference which covered a range of topics from education in Afghanistan to the drug issue and death penalty in Pakistan and Iran, conflict in Sri Lanka, and the right to health in Asia. "Today's event is the evidence that this is a continuation of the success of the previous conferences and the Department is extremely proud of this wonderful event", he said. After conveying thanks on behalf of the School of Law and Human Rights Centre to all the students who played a role

in making this event happen, he congratulated those who organized it and thanked the audience.





## **Vote of thanks**

Finally Mr. Hayman Oo from Myanmar, an MA Human Rights student, concluded the session with a few words of thanks. On behalf of the Conference working Committee, he expressed thanks to the audience and all the speakers who contributed to each session with provocative and informative discussion. He continued thanking those who had moderated each session, his fellow human rights students and all other Chevening scholarship students of Essex who were in support of the conference in many ways. He also thanked Professor Paul Hunt and Dr. Sanae Fujita for their close, dedicated and inspiring support, as well as the sponsors of the event, Chevening UK government Scholarship and Taiwan Democratic Foundation. Without all such support, this conference would have never happened.



The conference came to an end with tea, coffee, snacks and informal discussion.

## **Profile of the Speakers and Moderators**

**Ms. Rukamane Mahajan** is a human rights defender and legal professional. She is currently pursuing her LL.M. (International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law) at the University of Essex under the Chevening Scholarship 2013-2014. She has received various academic awards as well as appreciation for her works in Nepal. In 2009, the president of Nepal awarded her "Nepal Chhatra Vidhya Padak", a Medal for her academic excellence.

Ms. Mahajan has been working with conflict victims/survivors in Nepal. She worked for the International Center for Transitional Justice, Nepal office from late 2011 to 2013. She was involved with Gender and Transitional Justice issue and Right to Truth advocacy. Additionally, she advocates for gender justice and women's rights in Nepal. She is a part of various community based initiatives including "Free Basic Legal Awareness Classes" for women at grass-root level.

**Prof. Sir Nigel Rodley** is a professor of Law at the University of Essex and Chairperson of the UN Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

He obtained an LLB from the University of Leeds in 1963, an LLM from Columbia University in 1965, an LLM from New York University in 1970 and a PhD from the University of Essex in 1992. He started as an Assistant Professor of Law at Dalhousie University, Canada. In 1990, he was appointed as Reader in Law at the University of Essex and Professor of Law in 1994. He was Dean of Law from 1992 to 1995. From 1993 to 2001 he served as Special Rapporteur on Torture of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Since 2001 he has been a Member of the UN Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He is President of the International Commission of Jurists.

In 1998 he was knighted in the Queen's New Year's Honours list for services to Human Rights and International Law and in 2000 he received an honorary LL.D. from Dalhousie University. He was a joint recipient of the American Society of International Law's 2005 Goler T. Butcher Medal for distinguished work in human rights. In 2008 he was appointed an Honorary Fellow of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians. He has written and worked on numerous subject matters including international human rights, problem of impunity for human rights crimes and torture.

**Dr. Sanae Fujita** is a member of the School of Law/Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex. She has been an adviser for the annual student-led Human Rights in Asia conference from the first year. She is also a visiting scholar at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan. Her area of research is human rights and development, with a particular focus on the activities of International Financial Institutions, and she published *The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Human Rights: Developing Standards of Transparency, Participation and Accountability* (Edward Elgar publishing, 2013). She also has been engaged in the promotion of transparency in Japan as an advisor to civil society organisations. She holds a PhD in Law and an LL.M. in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex as well as an MA in International Development from Nagoya University, Japan.

**Mr. Abdul Halim Achakzai** is an Afghan research analyst, lawyer and human rights activist with around a decade of work experience in the fields of governance, research and informal justice system in Afghanistan. A graduate of Law and Political Science Faculty, Mr. Achakzai obtained his LL.B. degree in Diplomacy and Public Administration from Kabul University. Since 2007, he has worked with a number of national and international organizations that are active in human rights and governance sectors in Afghanistan. Mr. Achakzai has remained a member of Afghan Bar Association, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Young Leaders Forum), Afghan Youth Assembly and Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. He is the author of many research analyses, opinion pieces and reports on current affairs, and has represented Afghanistan in several national and regional conferences. In addition to his native language (Pashto), Mr. Achakzai is fluent in Persian (Dari), Hindi, Arabic, Urdu and English.

**Ms. Horia Mosadiq** is a 40-year-old Afghan human rights activist and journalist with around 20 years of work experience in Afghanistan and the region, in the fields of media, human rights, transitional justice and women's rights.

Award Winner of 2007 national human rights award in Afghanistan and in 2011 she was recognized among 50 bravest women of the world for her work by Glamour magazine in the United Kingdom, and in 2012 won Women Rights Defender Award from Amnesty International. Horia formed a number of human rights and media organizations in Afghanistan including the first war victims' (Apostrophe – it's plural and it is the network for/of the war victims.) network in Afghanistan and advocated widely at national and international level for accountability to the past human rights violations.

During the past 20 years Horia Mosadiq served as Director of Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC), Media Commissioner for Afghanistan Elections Commission 2005, Senior Advisor to Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and Observer in the Constitutional Loya Jirga of Afghanistan in 2003- 2004. She represented Afghanistan in 51st UN session Commission on the Status of women in year 2007 and chaired the human rights and civil society panel in Paris Conference and the civil society side event in year 2008.

Horia Mosadiq is the author of more than 100 articles and opinion pieces on human rights, women's rights and transitional justice in Afghanistan. Since September 2008 she is working at Amnesty International, International Secretariat as Afghanistan Researcher.

**Ms. Sumina Subba** is currently working on her MA in Human Rights and Cultural Diversity at University of Essex. Previously, she has worked as an Editorial Coordinator for a weekly publication and also as a Digital Content Writer for an Australian mortgage company. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences and at present, is also an Open Society Foundations scholar.

**Ms. Julie Hannah** is the Projects Director for the International Centre on Human Rights and Drug Policy seated in the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex. She has worked on human rights and humanitarian issues for more than 10 years. Eight of those years were spent living in Thailand, leading refugee programmes throughout the East Asia region. She has a Bachelor's degree in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia and a LLM in international human rights and humanitarian law from the University of Essex.

**Mr. Dan Dolan** joined Reprieve's death penalty team earlier this year, working principally on the organisation's campaign to prevent US states acquiring lethal injection drugs. Alongside his work on the lethal injection, Dan is active in Reprieve's "Stop Aid for Executions" campaign, which aims to encourage European Governments to push for the abolition of the death penalty in countries receiving counternarcotics aid.

Prior to Reprieve Dan worked as a consultant in corporate communications and CSR. His work in this field included campaigns to encourage mining companies to live up to their responsibilities on the issue of conflict minerals, and convincing pension funds to divest from fossil fuel companies with poor environmental records. Dan has also worked as a freelance journalist in Beirut, Lebanon, covering culture, media and technology.

**Ms. Nirmala Rajasingam** is a Sri Lankan Tamil author and activist who lives in London. She is a member of the steering committee of the Sri Lanka Democracy Forum (SLDF), an international network of progressive diaspora voices. She was the first woman to be detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the early 1980s, survived the government-engineered Welikade prison massacre, and was subsequently freed from prison by LTTE guerrillas. She left the LTTE as a result of the lack of internal democracy within the movement and its serious human-rights abuses. Nirmala Rajasingam is the sister of Rajani Thiranagama, founder-member of the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna), who was assassinated for her outspoken views. They are the subjects of the documentary film *No More Tears Sister* (National Film Board of Canada).

**Mr. Fred Carver** is a Campaign Director at the Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice. Before that he had a career in electoral campaigning and local government. He came to the Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice after a period spent studying the politics of South Asia and writing articles, both on state building and human rights in a South Asian context and issues of accountability and democracy more widely. Before starting in his current role he spent time in Sri Lanka talking to victims of torture and arbitrary detention and their families.

**Mr. Halil Kosumi** is a Chevening Scholar funded by the FCO/UK Government Scholarship - and studies LLM International Human Rights Law at the Law School of Essex. Mr. Kosumi holds a BA in Law (Tetovo, Macedonia) and LLM in South East European Law and European Integration (Graz, Austria). From 1999-2013 Mr. Kosumi worked for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Diplomatic Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo Verification Mission and after the war in Kosovo Mr. Kosumi worked as an Assistant Human Rights Officer and as a Senior Legal Assistant at the Department of Human Rights and Communities' Analysis and Reporting Cell, at the OSCE Mission in Kosovo/United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Mr. Kosumi has fourteen years of practical experience in human rights and rule of law, and governance monitoring, protection, promotion and reporting. Mr. Kosumi worked on monitoring and capacity building of the law enforcement community and justice system in Kosovo. Mr. Kosumi was responsible at the OSCE to prepare documents for the OSCE Ambassador in Kosovo and provide inputs for various reports to the OSCE Vienna Secretariat and reports to UNMIK for the UN Secretary General report to the Security Council. Mr. Kosumi worked for many years on minority issues in Kosovo and in the Balkans region.

**Ms. Tara Van Ho** is a Project Associate with the Essex Business & Human Rights Project and is completing her PhD in the School of Law. She is a licensed legal practitioner in the US State of Ohio, with a background in corporate law and litigation. She is an experienced teacher, researcher, and advocate. At the University of Essex, she has had sole or lead lecturing responsibilities for the undergraduate modules on Comparative Law and Public International Law, and has served on the teaching teams for the undergraduate Jurisprudence module and the post-graduate, interdisciplinary colloquium for the Human Rights Centre's MA/MSc programmes.

Tara has gained a strong reputation for her research. As a member of the Global Governance and Transnational Human Rights Obligations (GLOTHRO) Research Network, Tara is co-editing a book on the direct human rights obligations of corporations, and serves on an expert working group updating the Tilburg Principles on the human rights responsibilities of the World Bank and IMF. Her academic research feeds her work as an advocate. Tara's practical experience includes advising intergovernmental organisations, corporations, non-governmental organisations, and grass-roots activists on issues involving business and human rights. She has worked on and in a variety of countries, including Kosovo, Burma / Myanmar, Sudan and South Sudan, Afghanistan, Uganda, Senegal, and Nigeria. Her Ph.D. research is focused on the impact of international investment law on transitional justice initiatives in states emerging from conflict and authoritarianism. Because her focus is business and human rights, Tara maintains a generalist's approach to human rights and stays up-to-date on a large range of human rights concerns. She has conducted in-depth research on the

freedoms of religion, expression, assembly, association, the right to freedom from torture, the definition and content of effective remedies, conflicts between human rights and conflicts in international law laws, the rights to health, adequate standard of living, and education, and the human rights obligations of intergovernmental organisations.

As the former Director of the Essex Human Rights Clinic, Tara's work required a strong working knowledge of issues related to the projects on minorities rights, land rights, detention conditions, fair trial conditions, reparations in the Inter-American system, and business and human rights. She also maintains an active interest in international humanitarian law, particularly the laws of armed conflict. During her LL.M. studies, she was an international finalist with the Jean-Pictet Competition, and has now trained three successive Essex teams for their participation in the competition, each of them reaching the international semi-finals.

While undertaking her J.D. in the USA, she was an editor with the Human Rights Quarterly, a member of the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, and a corporate law fellow at the University of Cincinnati. In 2013, she was the Visiting Executive at the McDonough Centre for Leadership and Business at Marietta College, a four-year, liberal arts post-secondary school in Ohio, USA. She was also named Marietta College's 2013 Outstanding Young Alumna for her work in human rights.

B.A., Marietta College, Ohio, US

J.D., University of Cincinnati College of Law, Ohio, US

LL.M., International Human Rights Law, University of Essex

Licenses: Bar of the State of Ohio; Federal Southern District of Ohio

**Ms. Asmita Manandhar** is a student of MA in Human Rights and Cultural Diversity at University of Essex. While at University, she was involved with Sri Lanka Project for Human Rights Clinic. Before joining the Masters at University of Essex, she was a journalist for a national daily in Nepal. Her works were mainly focused on human-interest feature stories in gender and culture issues. Currently she is doing her internship at Amnesty International, London Secretariat.

**Ms. Yoshiko Sugita**, from Japan, is a student at the University of Essex, majoring in LLM International Human Rights Law. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies from Soka University of America, California, USA. She volunteered for a local NGO in Thailand and later wrote her senior thesis on "The Sex Industry and Thai Women". As a mediator, she also worked for Dispute Resolution Service, in which a mediator guides disputants in finding an agreement so that they can avoid going to the court.

As a recipient of Makiguchi Memorial Scholarship and Academic Excellence International Masters Scholarship from respective universities she attended, she will finish her degree in LLM, focusing on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

**Prof. Paul Hunt**, a New Zealand and British national, practiced as a litigation solicitor in London before specialising in international and domestic human rights law. He has lived, and undertaken human rights work, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the South Pacific. In the 1980s, he was Legal Officer of the London-based National Council for Civil Liberties (Liberty). Between 1990-1992, he was Associate Director of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies in Banjul, Gambia. Between 1992-2000, he was Senior Lecturer at Waikato University, in New Zealand. In 1998, he was nominated by the Government of New Zealand and elected by the UN to serve as an independent expert on the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999-2002). Between 2002-2008, he served as UN Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of health and, in 2008, was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Nordic School of Public Health. In 2011-2012, Professor Hunt has some part-time responsibilities with the World Health Organisation (Geneva), advising Assistant Director-General Dr. Flavia Bustreo on human rights issues. He is a member of the Human Rights Centre at Essex University and Adjunct Professor at Waikato University, New Zealand.

**Prof. Noam Lubell** is a Professor in the School of Law, University of Essex, and was appointed Head of the School in January 2014. In past years he was a Lecturer at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway; the Co-Director of the International Law Amicus Curiae Clinic at the Concord Research Centre in Israel; and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He holds a Ph.D in Law and an LL.M, as well as a B.A. in Philosophy. He has taught courses on international human rights law and the laws of armed conflict in a number of academic institutions, including the University of Essex, the National University of Ireland, the University of Oxford, the Geneva Academy, and as a Visiting Professor at Case Western Reserve University in the US. Prof. Lubell holds the Swiss Chair of International Humanitarian Law, at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, and is the Rapporteur of the International Law Association's Committee on the Use of Force.

In addition to his academic work, during the last fifteen years Prof. Lubell has worked for various organisations including human rights NGOs dealing with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, as Outreach Coordinator, International Law Advisor, and Director of a Prisoners & Detainees Project. He has also provided consultancies and training in human rights law and the laws of armed conflict, for international bodies such as Amnesty International, government bodies, and the BBC. From 2007-2011 he was a member of the Executive Committee of Amnesty International (Ireland). He has taught, researched and published on a variety of topics in the fields of international human rights law and the law of armed conflict. His recent book is 'Extraterritorial Force Against Non-state Actors' (Oxford University Press).

**Mr. Hayman Oo** is an activist who has been devotedly contributing to the development of civil society, promotion and protection of human rights and democratization process of the country through a number of programs with international and local non-governmental organizations including the British Council, International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES) and Shalom Foundation. He is a member of master-facilitator team of Active Citizen Program of the British Council, Myanmar. In 2004, he co-founded Scholar Institute (formerly Youth Development Initiative Networks) which was initiated as

an underground movement while the country was under the previous repressive military regime. He led the organization as Director from 2010 till 2012.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in International Relations from Dagon University, Yangon. He is an awardee of Chevening UK government Scholarship for the academic year 2013-2014 and is an MA student of Theory and Practice of Human Rights at the University of Essex, UK.



### **Conference Working Committee**

Chairperson- Ms. Rukamanee Mahajan

Co-chair- Mr. Hayman Oo

Finance Coordinator- Ms. Yoshiko Sugita

Publicity Team- Ms. Asmita Manandhar and Ms. Sumina Subba

Program Team- Mr. Abdul Halim Achakzai and Ms. Bhumika Modh

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### **Advisors**

Professor Paul Hunt

Dr. Sanae Fujita

## Financial Sponsors

Chevening UK government Scholarship, Student-led Event Program  
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

### Program of the Conference

Time	Session	Speaker	Moderator
9:00 – 10:00	Registration and Coffee	Room No. 4.309	
10:00 – 11:00	Welcome and Key Note Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Speech – Ms. Rukamanee Maharjan</li> <li>• Brief Overview of Human Rights in Asia - Dr. Sanae Fujita (5 min)</li> <li>• Key Note Speaker – Prof. Sir Nigel Rodley (30 min)</li> <li>• Q&amp;A – 10 min</li> </ul>	Ms. Rukamanee Maharjan
11:00 -11:20	Coffee Break	Room No. 4.309	
11:20 – 12:00	Girls Education in Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker – Ms. Horia Mosadiq (20 min)</li> <li>• Q&amp;A -15 min</li> </ul>	Mr. Abdul Halim Achakzai
12:00 -12:45	The Death Penalty for Drug Offences In Pakistan: International Counter-Narcotic Aid and Challenges to Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speakers – Ms. Julie Hannah (15 min)</li> <li>• Mr. Fred Craver (15 min)</li> <li>• Q&amp;A: 10 min</li> </ul>	Ms. Sumina Subba
12:45 -13:45	Lunch	Room No. 5.401	
13:45-14:25	Conflicts and Human Rights in Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker – Ms. Nirmala Rajasingam (20 min)</li> <li>• Commentator – Mr. Fred Carver (10 min)</li> <li>• Q&amp;A -5 min</li> </ul>	Mr. Halil Kosomi
14:25-15:05	Perspectives on Human Rights in Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speakers – Ms. Asmita Manandhar (Nepal) (10 min)</li> <li>• Ms. Yoshiko Sugita (Japan) (10 min each)</li> <li>• Q &amp; A -15 min</li> </ul>	Ms. Tara Van Ho
15:05-15:40	Right to Health in South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker – Prof. Paul Hunt (20 min)</li> <li>• Q&amp;A: 15 min</li> </ul>	Ms. Sanae Fujita
15:40-16:20	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Awards by Essex Human Rights Alumni Association</li> <li>• Closing Remarks – Prof. Noam Lubell (10 min)</li> <li>• Vote of Thanks and Closing – Mr. Hayman Oo</li> </ul>	Mr. Hayman Oo
16:20 – 17:00	Drinks and Networking time	Room No. 4.311	