

Universal Periodic Review

(51st Session)

Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information

Nepal

I. RATIFICATION OF UNESCO CONVENTIONS

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession, acceptance, approval or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Acceptance on 20 June 1978			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratification on 15 June 2010			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	Not ratified			
Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960	Not ratified	Reservation to this Convention shall not be permitted		Right to education

II. REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Discrimination in education (UNESCO consultations)

1. Nepal did not submit a report for the 10th consultation on the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education but did for the 11th

consultation.

Constitution and main education law(s)

2. The [Constitution of Nepal of 2015](#) recognizes that every citizen shall have the right of access to basic education, but does not enshrine the right to education (article 31. 1). It also provides for the right to equality and a non-discrimination principle (article 18). The Constitution guarantees that “every citizen shall have the right to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the State” (article 31. 2).
3. The [Free and Compulsory Education act of 2018](#) enshrines the right to get education, but it is limited to citizens (article 3). The same article also provides for a principle of non-discrimination in education. According to the same act, education starting at the age of five is compulsory for eight years covering primary and lower secondary education (articles 2 and 6), and free for 12 years covering primary and secondary education (articles 2 and 20). The Free and Compulsory Education act of 2018 also guarantees one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education (articles 2, 6 and 20).

Minimum age of employment

4. [The Child Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act of 2000](#) (article 3) and the [Act relating to Children of 2018](#) (article 7) set the minimum age of employment at 14. According to ILO Convention 138 (Minimum age convention) “The minimum age [for admission to employment or work] shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years”. However, the minimum age can be lowered to 14 years under certain circumstances (article 4).

Enrolment rates

5. Most recent UIS available data for the enrollment rates is as follows:

	Pre-primary education (net) (2024)	Primary education (gross) (2024)	Secondary education (gross) (2024)	Tertiary education (gross) (2023)
Girls	58.04%	124.50%	90.89%	20.79%
Boys	66.36%	124.74%	89.91%	17.25%
Total	62.31%	124.62%	90.39%	19.04%

Investment in education

6. According to UIS data, in Nepal in 2021, the government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 4.43%, and 12.82% of the total government expenditure. The most recent UIS data indicates that, in 2023, the government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 3.96%.

Quality education

7. During the last cycle, many recommendations were made to ensure free quality education for all (159.51, 159.53, 159.138, 159.147, 159.151 and 159.152). In that

regard, one objective of the [2022/23-2031/32 School Education Sector Plan](#) is “to ensure that the curriculum and reading materials meet the quality standards and are relevant, timely and abreast of recent developments of children’s needs”. Nepal also adopted the [TVET Sector Strategic Plan \(2023-2032\)](#), which notably aims at strengthening quality TVET services and system for all.

8. According to the [Global Education Monitoring Report of 2023](#), in 2021, the government of Nepal introduced free internet access to all community schools, aiming to equip 60% of them with free broadband by the end of 2022 (Regmi, 2021). The same report indicates that, in 2022, 12% of primary schools were equipped with computers; however, only 5% were connected to the internet.

Human rights education:

9. During the last cycle, Nepal was recommended to strengthen human rights education in its curriculum (159.32, 159.40, 159.43, 159.139, 159.194 and 159.196). One strategy of the [2022/23-2031/32 School Education Sector Plan](#) of Nepal explicitly aims at integrating various soft/non-cognitive skills and human values, including gender, inclusion, respect for diversity, equity, human rights, non-violence, peace and cohesion, awareness of sustainable development and environmental change, global perspective, social harmony and citizen skills in curricula, curricular materials and learning processes.

Gender equality

10. During the last cycle, Nepal was recommended to ensure gender equality in education (159.148, 159.150, 159.156, 159.173 and 159.181). According to the [Global education monitoring report 2024/5, Leadership in education: lead for learning](#), in Nepal, in 2023, the gender parity index favours women in tertiary education (with a tertiary gross enrolment ratio at 1.20) and men in TVET (with a youth vocational education participation rate at 0.97). Nepal also adopted the [TVET Sector Strategic Plan \(2023-2032\)](#) which includes a strategy to enhance greater inclusion in TVET, notably for women, through various scholarship and incentive schemes.

Minorities

11. During the last cycle, recommendations were made to Nepal to take all necessary measures to ensure full inclusion and improve learning results for all children belonging to minority communities (159.150). Another objective of the [2022/23-2031/32 School Education Sector Plan](#) is to “increase participation of persons belonging to targeted groups (Dalits, Janajatis, endangered communities, those living in geographical remote areas, vulnerable, physically challenged, economically disadvantaged, conflict affected, minorities, and socially and economically deprived children) in education and improve their learning outcome by providing easy access to school education”.

People with disabilities:

12. During the last cycle, Nepal was recommended to enhance its efforts to ensure inclusive education for people with disabilities, at all levels of education (159.150, 159.153, 159.221 and 159.224). In that regard, Nepal adopted the

[2022/23-2031/32 School Education Sector Plan](#). One key activity of this plan is to develop “specific models and strategies to cater to the needs of children with disabilities [...] based on the inclusive education approach paper and roadmap”.

Comprehensive sexuality education:

13. During the last cycle, Nepal was recommended to “ensure that marginalized groups are able to exercise their reproductive rights through [...] the full integration of comprehensive sexuality education, consistent with the evolving capacities and needs of youth” (159.137). In that regard, one objective of the [2022/23-2031/32 School Education Sector Plan](#) is to “incorporate topics related to [...] comprehensive sexual education and reproductive health in curricula”.

B. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Constitutional and Legislative framework

14. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 guarantees freedom of expression and opinion in Article 17 (2) (a).¹ Article 27 of the Constitution also safeguards the right to information. Additionally, Article 19 of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 explicitly addresses the Right to Communication. It states that "every citizen shall have the right to communication" and further details several sub-clauses, including the right not to be censored, the right to information, and the right to print and publish, and transmit information through electronic media.
15. The Muluki Criminal Code 2074 (2017) addresses defamation as a criminal offence.²
16. The Press and Publication Act of 1991 and the National Broadcasting Act of 1993 regulate the Nepalese media sector through accreditation and licensing. Article 15 of both laws permits the Nepalese government to prohibit certain broadcasts and publications regarding matters of national interest.³
17. The Electronic Transactions Act of 2008 also addresses various forms of electronic transactions and certain online conduct, with Section 47 allowing for penalties including fines and imprisonment for prohibited content, which has been

¹ https://ag.gov.np/files/Constitution-of-Nepal_2072_Eng_www.moljpa.gov_.npDate-72_11_16.pdf

² https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3_isn=106060

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http://nepalpolicy.net/images/documents/Information%20and%20Communication/Acts/1991_Press%20and%20Publication%20Act.pdf and see the National Broadcasting Act, 2052 (1995) at <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/national-broadcasting-rules-2052-1995.pdf>

applied to social media users.⁴

18. The Right to Information Act of 2007 and the Right to Information Rules of 2009 further formalize the right to information.⁵
19. In February 2025, a new Media Council Bill was proposed to replace the existing Press Council of Nepal with a new Media Council Nepal.⁶
20. In 2025, a proposed Social Network Bill aims to regulate social media platforms and users through increased registration, penalization, and content moderation.⁷

Implementation of legislation

21. In accordance with the National Broadcasting Act 1993, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is the primary authority responsible for issuing broadcasting licenses.⁸ The National Telecommunications Authority was established by this Act and consists of a Chairman and four board members appointed by His Majesty's Government through the Ministry.⁹

Safety of Journalists

22. Since 2006, when systematic monitoring began, UNESCO recorded eight killings of journalists in Nepal, on its Observatory of Killed Journalists.¹⁰ Three cases remain ongoing or unresolved and five cases have been resolved according to information provided by the government.¹¹

C. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

⁴ <https://lawcommission.gov.np/content/13397/electronic--electronic--traded-international-act--2063/>; https://radiantca.com.np/assets/nav_file/Electronic%20Transaction%20Act%202063.pdf

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https://www.ntnc.org.np/sites/default/files/doc_page/Right%20to%20Information%20Act%202007%20%282064%20BS%29.pdf;
https://ntnc.org.np/sites/default/files/doc_page/Right%20to%20Information%20Regulation%202009%20%282065%20BS%29.pdf

⁶ <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2025/02/10/national-assembly-passes-media-council-bill>

⁷ <https://na.parliament.gov.np/en/bills/JCC7TZJz>

⁸ <https://www.nta.gov.np/uploads/contents/Telecom%20Act%20Upto%20date%20Eng.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.nta.gov.np/ntamembers>

¹⁰ Accessed on 15 May 2025.

¹¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory/country-overview?country=bf163642-9561-5f4d-a06a-30cfb7df3bc5&hub=72609>

23. The Constitution of Nepal includes several science-related provisions. Article 51(f)(4) requires the State to promote investment in scientific studies, research, and inventions, ensuring the advancement of science and technology, and commits to protecting scientific, technological, and intellectual talents. The Constitution further addresses the development and expansion of information technology (Article 51(f)(5)), science in education (Article 51(h)(1)), and calls for prioritizing health research (Article 51(h)(9)). There is no explicit reference to the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
24. Nepal has acceded to the ICESCR, but it has not yet ratified its Optional Protocol.
25. Nepal did not include in its Third Cycle National Report (2020) an explicit reference to the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, or inherent rights such as scientific freedom. It mentioned that climate change mitigation and adaptation projects are being implemented despite constraints in resources and technology (A/HRC/WG.6/37/NPL/1, [114]). No Recommendations were made in respect of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits or its inherent rights such as scientific freedom. Nepal did not submit its national report on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers for the consultation period from 2017 to 2021, nor has it yet done so for the second consultation from 2021 to 2025.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

26. Nepal should be encouraged to:
 - i. Ratify the Convention against Discrimination in Education.
 - ii. Enshrine the right to education within the Constitution.
 - iii. Explicitly enshrine the right to education for all within the legislation.
 - iv. Guarantee in the legislation at least nine years of compulsory primary and secondary education.
 - v. Continue its efforts to ensure free quality education for all.
 - vi. Continue efforts to ensure the right to inclusive education for minorities and people with disabilities.
 - vii. Raise the minimum age of employment to at least 15 in accordance with international human rights law.
 - viii. Ensure the minimum age of employment is aligned with the end of compulsory education.
 - ix. Continue its efforts to strengthen human rights education in its curricula.
 - x. Continue its efforts to integrate comprehensive sexuality education in its curricula.
 - xi. Continue to ensure regular reporting to UIS on education data.
 - xii. Continue to regularly submit comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO's education-related standard-setting

instruments, and notably on the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.

- xiii. Share with UNESCO any relevant information to update its country profile on UNESCO's [Observatory on the Right to Education](#) and [HerAtlas](#).

B. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

27. The Government is encouraged to continue investigating unresolved cases of killed journalists and to voluntarily report on the status of judicial follow-up to UNESCO and to the SDG 16.10.1 monitoring processes.
28. The Government is recommended to establish an independent broadcasting regulator and assess the system of supervision of the media sector in order to ensure that this process is transparent and independent.
29. The Government is recommended to decriminalize defamation and place it within civil defamation legislation that is in accordance with international standards.

C. RIGHT TO FREELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY (CULTURAL RIGHTS)

30. Nepal is encouraged to ratify the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The UNESCO Culture Conventions promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Nepal is encouraged to facilitate the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, migrants, refugees, young people, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

D. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

31. Nepal is invited to continue its efforts to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation and monitoring of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in accordance with the relevant Decisions of UNESCO's Executive Board (216 EX/Decision 45 of May 2023). In that context, Nepal is invited to engage with UNESCO's Program on the promotion of scientific freedom and the safety of scientists and support the related Call to Action in line with the Recommendation and decisions of UNESCO's General Conference (42 C/Resolution 26 of November 2023) and Executive Board (219 EX/Decision 30 of March 2024). The Call to Action underlines the need to protect science and scientific researchers, and to allow for a free and safe science ecosystem where

there is trust in science and where scientific evidence informs decision making. UNESCO stands ready to support Nepal in developing and nurturing its science ecosystem, and protecting its scientific researchers, including through the incorporation of appropriate legal and administrative measures in line with international law. Nepal is invited to collaborate directly with UNESCO, through its Secretariat and specialised Sectors, for that purpose.

32. Against this background, Nepal is invited to consider the following:

- i. Submit a national report to the 2nd consultation on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in line with the Circular Letter by UNESCO's Director-General (CL/4448 of 28 November 2024) and the guidelines contained therein.
- ii. Explore ways to strengthen the status of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits in its legal system, including in its Constitution and any other appropriate legal and policy frameworks.
- iii. When implementing measures to guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to information, and the right to education, include within those measures the freedoms indispensable for scientific research, and access to scientific education at all levels.
- iv. Expand input on issues covered by UNESCO's Recommendation in its national report to the UPR – particularly providing information about the implementation of the right to science and scientific freedom, including the latter in its report addressing more broadly freedom of opinion and expression. This will allow further discussions thereon at the Human Rights Council and the formulation of specific recommendations.
- v. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR.