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Ms. Sunita Danuwar Received 2015 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy held the annual award ceremony of Asian Democracy and Human Rights Award this morning on December 10th at Far East Plaza Hotel Taipei; and the laureate of this year goes to Ms. Sunita Danuwar of Nepal. Ms. Sunita Danuwar, was once a victim of human trafficking, is a leading social activist in Nepal and the founding member and current president of Shakti Samuha, the first non-governmental organization sheltering survivors from human trafficking in Nepal.

President Ma Ying-jeou was invited to offer the award sculpture to Ms. Sunita Danuwar; and the Legislative Yuan Speaker Wang Jin-pyng, also the Chairman of Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, provided the award grant of 100,000 US Dollars to Ms. Sunita Danuwar, validating her remarkable dedication.

During his speech, President Ma illustrated his admiration to the outstanding accomplishments of Ms. Sunita Danuwar, and praising her high involvement in lobbying and helping human trafficking victims out of the struggle situation they suffered from. President Ma also recalled Taiwan's great advancement of eradicating children prostitution in the past twenty years. While this challenge was still rampant around the Asia region that called for mutual cooperation from the international community to address collectively, as this is not only the infringement to the human rights but also the regression of civilization, and Taiwan will be no exception in dedicating our efforts to eradicate this problem.

Later on, Speaker Wang Jin-Pyng, the Chairman of Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, also stated that since the establishment of Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award in 2006, through open nominations and two stages of reviewing process, each year TFD has awarded individuals or organizations that have demonstrated long-term commitment and outstanding leadership in advancing democracy or human rights through peaceful means. Ms. Sunita Danuwar was chosen as the winner of the 2015 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award. Taiwan Foundation for Democracy is delighted to honor Ms. Sunita Danuwar in recognition of her dedication to rescuing female victims from human trafficking and advocating on the prevention.

Ms. Sunita Danuwar expressed her humility to accept this year's Award. She considers that this award signifies not only the acknowledgement of her continuous efforts and dedications to the human trafficking rescue, but also the total support from the international society to the human trafficking survivors as well. Ms. Danuwar also stated that today is the International Human Rights day, but millions of children and women in the world are still living bounded life and facing life threat, revealing that it is the long way to go. Yet she was convinced firmly that via the continuous advocacy, awakening movement, and human rights promotion under the collective power, the realization of this vision will be within sight.

Ms. Danuwar's role in Shakti Samuha is not confined in single but multi-dimension. She has been a coordinator, program director, counselor, and trainer. She is a counselor for the rescued girls and women; a teacher to teach and also empower them. Ms. Danuwar has a key role not only in making policy of Shakti Samuha and planning strategy, but also involved in policy making, strategy development and organizing training programs.

Since the foundation of Shakti Samuha established in 1996, it has been organizing and empowering the returning trafficking survivors by providing shelter, legal aids, counseling and vocational training for jobs like barista, seamstress, or beautician. It has set up Women Protection

Committees in 11 districts of Nepal in order to prevent trafficking and violence against women. They have also set up Adolescent Girls Groups based in the poorest communities in order to pass on the message about the dangers of trafficking. Now this organization is reaching out to rural districts where trafficking is prevalent, helping to keep women safe and make a united stand against the traffickers.

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