

Dr Morna Nance, British Council India

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Dr Justice A S Anand, Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission India

Mark Runacres, Acting British High Commissioner to India

Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon. I am Morna Nance, the Acting Director of the British Council in India and I'm most honoured to have been invited to make some closing remarks and give the Vote of Thanks today.

We gathered here three days ago with a promise that our time spent here, our discussions and deliberations, would have some positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities. I am happy to declare that we have kept that promise – in substantial measure. This unique collaboration of National Human Rights Institutions from the Commonwealth and the Asia Pacific Region, and of Disability rights NGOs from within India, has agreed substantive recommendations which will be submitted to the Second Meeting of the UN Ad Hoc Committee in June.

These recommendations reflect the aspirations of all stakeholders who have taken part in the last few days, and our meeting here, we all hope, will add strength to the growing international momentum for the adoption of a new Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. We have also agreed on recommendations for each of us to take forward here within our own countries and organisations.

For us at the British Council, the success of this workshop encourages us to continue with greater commitment our work with National Human Rights Institutions across the Commonwealth and hopefully elsewhere. Such Institutions have a significant role to play in the protection and promotion of the human rights of all people. Increasing and strengthening the capacity of these organisations will thus go a long way in ensuring that the next generations live in a just and equal world.

It is with a view to facilitate networking between such institutions in the Commonwealth and elsewhere, that I am pleased to announce here today, the establishment, in the near future, of a post for a National Human Rights Institutions Information Manager, to be based here in the British Council in India. Its general aim will be to support the gathering and sharing of information by and between institutions, working in close collaboration with our partner the National Human Rights Commission here in India, and with our regional and international partners such as the Asia Pacific Forum and the Office of the UN

As this workshop ends today, we look at the future with a lot of hope. If we continue to work together, then this future will bring equal participation and opportunity for people with disabilities. I therefore thank all the partners in this venture and all the people who have worked so hard to put this workshop together – the National Human Rights Commission of India, the Asia Pacific Forum, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for

Human Rights and us. I and my colleagues are delighted to have been associated with this initiative.

I would like to thank Mark Runacres, Acting British High Commissioner to India and Dr Justice A S Anand, Chair of the National Human Rights Commission of India for having come here and shared their thoughts with us.

I hope the participants have enjoyed their time in India and I wish you all a safe journey back home.

Thank you.