

## **ART OF INTERVIEW WORKSHOP AT SOPHIA COLLEGE**

### **Reporting Contest by U.S. Consulate Mumbai**

**Winner: Smriti Basnet**

#### **Consular Officer holds press conference at Sophia College for Women**

16 December, Tuesday

By Smriti Basnet

Vice Consular General, Mr. Kevin Wilson, of the US Consulate General of Mumbai held a press conference on Tuesday, 16 December 2014, at Sophia College for Women on the issue of USA and Human Rights. The conference covered a wide range of issues including the State's effort to compile various Human Rights Reports, start Grant Programs and establish Funds as well as implement Programs to tackle Gender Based Violence all over the world.

Stating that the "one of the key areas of focus of US Foreign Policy is Human Rights", Mr. Wilson elaborated on the different reports compiled by the US State Department. The three that he particularly pointed out were the Human Rights Report, Trafficking in Persons Report and the International Religious Freedom Report. According to Mr. Wilson these reports, which contain extensive details and account of Human Rights violations, are compiled by US diplomats stationed in different parts of the world. These reports facilitate the US State Department to analyze each nation's capacity to address various human rights issues. In effect these statistics, which are produced annually, help the respective nations tackle such issues. "Governments have been responding to these reports," said Mr. Wilson.

Moreover, as the conference progressed, Mr. Wilson highlighted on the Grant Programs that the US has started. In the interest of creating a "peaceful democratic world" the US has initiated projects such as Human Rights and Democracy Fund, Human Rights and Defenders' Fund and Lifeline: Embattled NGOs Assistance Fund to name a few. Not only do these Grant Programs fund those who have been victims of human rights violations but also support individuals and NGOs who advocate human rights. "Each year diplomats report back to the US State Department with an assessment of how the funds are being used," said Mr. Wilson. Towards the end of the conference, Mr. Wilson also pointed out the efforts of the US to curb Gender Based Violence. Collaborating with NGOs, forming public-private partnerships and helping bring about judicial and legal reforms are some of the areas that this project looks into.

In addition to this, Mr. Wilson also spoke about the State's proactive role in fighting the "war against terror". Stating that all these projects have been started "for humanity" and to "raise awareness" among all the countries, Mr. Wilson further hoped that other nations would follow the US lead on this.