

**THE  
CARTER CENTER**



---

**Observing Nepal's Peace Process and  
Constitution Drafting**

**Quarterly Report #14  
January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013**

## **GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Organisation:** The Carter Center

**Contact person:** David Hamilton  
The Carter Center  
House No. 608/50  
Naxal-1, Hattisar  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: +977 1 444 5055/1446  
Fax: +977 1 444 5055/1446 ext. 104

Tessa Stromdahl (Atlanta Headquarter Office)  
Associate Director of Development, The Carter Center  
453 Freedom Parkway  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
Tel: +1 404 420 5191  
Email: trieger@emory.edu

**Partner:** N/A

**Contact person:** N/A

**Project Title:** Observing Nepal's Peace Process and Constitution Drafting

**Project Goal:** A consolidated post-conflict democracy in Nepal.

**Project Duration:** September 3, 2009 – December 31, 2013

**Status of Report:** Quarterly

**Overall Project Budget: USD \$1,638,419**

**USAID Contribution: \$999,953**

---

## **I. Progress towards Stated Project Goal and Objectives**

### **A. ACTIVITY 1: OBSERVE NEPAL'S PEACE PROCESS AND CONSTITUTION DRAFTING**

- 1) Conduct regional and district observation to track the peace process, such as implementation of key political agreements, public engagement with the CA at the local level, and the effectiveness of local governance.**
  - a. Progress on stated indicators for this output, during the reporting period of January 1 – March 31, 2013:
    1. Observer teams deployed in October have visited all 75 districts in Nepal to date.
    2. Staff held approximately 549 meetings this quarter— 70 at Headquarters and 479 field team interviews
    3. LTOs and staff have not yet observed any official public consultations of the Constituent Assembly because the project was not running during the first opinion collection period (February/March 2009) and a second opinion collection period did not take place during the tenure of the CA.
    4. One LTO orientation session was held this quarter during the first week of February.
    5. The scope of information sought by TCC observers and staff during this period covered: 1) the constitutional process and issues; 2) voter registration; 3) identity-based groups; 4) the peace process, 5) political parties, and 6) the security environment. Each of these topics was further broken down into various sub-categories, such as identity politics, return of PLA, the security environment, and citizen perceptions of constitutional issues and the national political process during this period. No regional reporting occurred during this period.
- 2) Team international and Nepali national observers together.** In order to be more effective in their deployment areas and understand complicated local dynamics, international and national observers are paired so they can maximize the combined strengths of national and international observers.
- 3) Track CA and Government Activity.** The Center also lightly tracked the functioning of the Constituent Assembly and the government, watching especially for efforts to increase public participation and specifically that of historically marginalized groups such as Madhesis, Janajatis, Dalits and women.
- 4) Issue regular private and public reports to raise awareness.**

The Carter Center released three public reports, briefings, or statements during this reporting period. Reports were released on the voter registration process and identity-based politics. President Carter also drafted an Op-Ed on the need for elections. (See attached.)
- 5) Engage with national and local political leaders to address political solutions, as appropriate.**
  - a. The Carter Center held multiple meetings at the national and local levels with senior government and political party members (Nepali Congress, CPN-UML,

UCPN-Maoist, RPP, RJP, RPP-N, MJF-N, MJF-D, TMLP, Sadbhawana Party, MoPR, MoHA, Acting Chief Election Commissioner, CA Secretary, and others), Nepali civil society (journalists, INSEC, Advocacy Forum, NEOC, and others) and members of the international community (UNDP, IOM, ICTJ, IFES, ICG, NDI, TAF, UN RCHCO and others) to discuss progress on the peace process and constitution drafting and share findings from the observers.

- b. During this period and in regular meetings, interlocutors have expressed positive feedback about TCC reports and have inquired about TCC LTO findings. They have also expressed a desire for continued Carter Center support to the peace process.

**6) Conduct regular briefing sessions with international stakeholders and coordinate closely with national stakeholders.**

- a. TCC conducted one international stakeholders sessions during this reporting quarter. During this quarter, however, the Carter Center did not conduct any stakeholder sessions.
- b. Carter Center staff attended two international coordination meetings this period.
- c. TCC staff have continued the monthly meetings with the US Government Peace and Democracy Implementers, including Ambassador Peter W. Bodde, new Political/Economic Office Chief Michael B. Goldman, Trish Mohoney, Deputy Chief of Mission, as well as the IFES, NDI, and TAF.
- d. TCC has also had two meetings with UNDPA about the visit of Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman to Nepal during March.

**7) Communicate national findings to the local level.** Observers share the national findings from TCC public reports in their deployment areas. They provide factual information on various parts of Nepal’s transition as requested by interested groups.

**8) Ensure gender and social inclusiveness in the project activities, beneficiaries, and staff.**

- a. Gender and social inclusiveness are carefully respected in all project activities. LTO teams meet with a diverse range of citizens. While often meetings held at district headquarters level are disproportionately attended by men (given that the majority of senior representatives of political parties, government agencies, security agencies, and civil society organizations are male), observers attempt to address this imbalance by also meeting with women civil society members and interviewing women at the village level. Additionally, observers make a special effort to meet with representatives of other marginalized groups (Madhesis, Janajatis, Dalits, “backwards groups,” etc.) in order to get their views, particularly in relation to the issue of federalism.
- b. Gender and social inclusiveness are also respected within the Carter Center’s staffing plan. During the reporting period, 56% (10 of 18) of the Center’s national staff belong to a marginalized group (specifically, we have women, Janajati, Madhesi, and Muslim staff). Additionally, our international observers represent six different nationalities and are 50% female.

**B. ACTIVITY 2: CONDUCT A LIMITED OBSERVATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION**

The Carter Center received a formal invitation from the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to observe the “Voter Register with Photograph Program.” Given the importance of an accurate

voter list and a transparent and effective voter registration process, the Center is conducting a limited observation of the program.

1. **Deploy existing observation teams to report on voter registration in their deployment locations.**
  - a. Teams visited multiple districts to assess the Election Commission's "display, claims, and objections" period and "Missed Voter Registration" exercise.
  - b. Observers made follow-up enquiries with DEOs and other local government and election officials about voter registration, obstructions, and other potential election security risks.
  - c. The Carter Center is developing a spread-sheet of potential conflict areas ahead of the next election.
2. **Collaborate closely with the ECN, UNDP, IFES and domestic observer networks and civil society organizations engaged with the process.**
  - a. During the reporting period, the Carter Center met several times with the ECN, UNDP, IFES, and NEOC. All provided helpful consultation for our observation strategy as well as training and input for our LTO teams and observation documents.
  - b. In early August, the ECN had suggested that the government amend existing electoral laws in order to conduct an election on a new date. The existing electoral laws currently prevent this from happening.

## II. Summary of Relevance and Effectiveness

- A. During the reporting period, both national and international actors have communicated to the Carter Center that its presence in Nepal is relevant and effective. From their perspective, the three main contributions of the Carter Center are: a) keeping pressure on all key actors to move the peace process forward; b) providing direct information from around the country about current dynamics and trends in the field, as well as possible early warning signs of conflict/violence; and c) providing an impartial review of and feedback on the ongoing voter registration program of the ECN.
- B. Comments/feedback on TCC project this quarter (January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013)

This section is divided into three areas: 1) feedback and reactions to the reports released during this period), 2) feedback and reactions that came in during this period to previous Carter Center reports, and 3) miscellaneous feedback.

1. Feedback and Reactions on TCC project this quarter:
  - *Kathmandu Post* Editor: Very happy to see a news story about TCC land report in his newspaper, noted KTM post editorial on same subject. Said he received calls and messages from some of his friends that the Carter Center also raised the issue of land reform, after KTM Post wrote about it. His contacts told him that they read TCC report on land issues and were happy to know TCC is also serious about this issue.
  - Positive comments on the compiled field reports from Tim Trenkle and Jason Meeks (US Embassy), Anagha Neelakantan (ICG), Prashant Jha (journalist) and others.
  - Thanks a lot, this is very useful and complements other reports in an excellent manner. – Martin Stuerzinger (Swiss Embassy)
2. Media Coverage

Below is a selection of media coverage and citations to the Carter Center reports in the project period.

a. 5<sup>th</sup> Interim Report on Voter Registration

- ‘Carter Center Wants Citizenship Issue Addressed Before Election,’ *The Kathmandu Post*, February 28
- ‘Carter Center suggests update of voter list,’ *The Himalayan Times*, March 1

b. Identity Report

- ‘Federalism issues led to tension among parties: Carter Center,’ *Kantipur*, March 14, <http://www.ekantipur.com/2013/03/14/top-story/federalism-issues-led-to-tension-among-parties-carter-center/368390.html>
- ‘Identity-based political activities decrease in Nepal,’ March 13, *Nepal24Hours*, March 13, <http://www.nepal24hours.com/en/?p=18963>
- ‘In Search of Nepali Identities,’ *Republica*, March 29. “Nearly a year after these sporadic incidents of violence occurred in different parts of the country, the Carter Center came out with a detailed report on identity-based politics. The report, entitled “Identity-based political activity and mobilizations in Nepal,” not only has highlighted the incidents mentioned above, but has also analyzed the overall identity-based activities.

c. President Carter Visit

- ‘Former U.S. President Carter Arrives in Nepal’ *Republica*, March 29, [http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=52295](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=52295)

3. Feedback and Reactions from the local level:

- I used information from the recent TCC report on Voter Registration in my training of VDC Secretaries and Municipality Ward Secretaries on the upcoming phases of Voter Registration where I read out 2-3 lines exactly the same from the report. I found it very useful. I emphasized TCC’s important findings on Citizenship Card access and instructed the participants to pay attention to Citizenship Card issues because they are important. – CDO of Kanchanpur.

4. Miscellaneous Feedback

- “You are one of the few organizations with a genuine grassroots presence in Nepal. We [at the embassy] have found your reporting to be invaluable.”-Amb. Susan Grace, Australia

### III. President Carter Visit

President Carter travelled to Kathmandu during the last week of the reporting period to assess the progress of election preparations, the political climate, and to have meetings with key stakeholders. President Carter, along with former U.S. Ambassador to India Peter Burleigh, Project Manager David Pottie and Field Office Director David Hamilton met with president Ram Baran Yadav, interim Prime Minister Khil Raj Regmi, head of the electoral commission Neil Uprety, Army Chief General Rana,

and leadership from political parties including Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), Nepali Congress, United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), and the Madhesi parties. President Carter also arranged a meeting with Maoist leader Baidya, various indigenous groups, and the international community. At the end of President Carter's trip a press conference was held which was well attended by both local and international media.

#### **IV. Summary of Lessons Learned**

1. It continues to be useful to do significant future planning regarding possible report topics and creation of thematic specific reporting forms.
2. The addition of a Kathmandu-based Research, Planning, and Drafting (RPD) team has increased our rate of report production and the quality of the reports we produce.
3. In an effort to reduce project costs after being prompted by donors, we decided to close down our office in Janakpur district (Central Tarai). While this addition had been useful, it appeared that dynamics in the Eastern/Central Tarai were consistent enough that this team could be eliminated if there are not sufficient funds to cover these costs when extending the project.
4. Greater and more targeted outreach to Nepali civil society, non-print media, government officials and political leaders is required to ensure TCC findings and recommendations are used most effectively.
5. There are opportunities for the Carter Center to use its convening authority in areas where there are gaps in coordination (such as on interim relief to conflict victims) but the Center does not have the staff/resources to be the lead agency, as it is separate from our core project activity.
6. Lack of an organized way to track, access, search, and sort data has created a challenge for the project, given its unexpectedly long-term nature. We have now created a database where all information and reports can be stored and easily searched. This has proved to be a valuable asset to the project and has also contributed to increased report production.

#### **V. Summary of Staffing Resources and Organisational Issues**

Nothing to report at this time.

#### **VI. Future Issues of Relevance**

- a. Anticipated future problems, delays, or conditions or constraints that may adversely impact implementation of the program.
  1. The failure of the Constituent Assembly to promulgate a constitution created greater uncertainty for democratic progress in Nepal. However, the High Level Political Mechanism (HLPM) has pushed for an interim election government, which was met with mixed responses from Nepalis and resulted in successful bandhs throughout the country in the early spring. The future course of the constitutional process and peace process are unclear.

2. The HLPM's Election Commission remains restricted in planning or holding new elections, with an original target date in early June that has now been pushed to at least the latter half of November 2013.
  3. Skepticism from some portions of the civil service and political parties about the role of the international community in Nepal appears to be increasing.
- b. Information on security issues, especially as these affect program integrity and safety of cooperating and implementing partners.
1. Possible security issues include low-level insecurity in the Tarai, the small number of underground or semi-underground groups throughout the country, and the potential for unrest, instability or violence around protests such as bandhs or protests regarding federalism. However, in our assessment, none of these appear to be immediate security concerns. Should the security risk increase, we will employ a range of options, the most severe of which would be pulling teams back to Kathmandu.
  2. The Carter Center does not work directly with implementing partners in Nepal.
- c. Information on new opportunities for program expansion.
1. Nothing to report at this time.
- d. Other pertinent information.
- i. Nothing to report at this time