

**THE
CARTER CENTER**



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

Quarterly Report #18
January 1, 2014- March 31, 2014

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Organisation: The Carter Center

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

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

Project Duration: September 3, 2009 – June 30, 2014

Status of Report: Quarterly

Project Budget: USD \$3,524,212.00

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, 2014:
 1. Observer teams deployed in October visited all 75 districts in Nepal before departing the project at the end of the last reporting period.
 2. Remaining staff in Kathmandu held approximately 50 meetings during this quarter
 3. No long term observer (LTO) training sessions were held this quarter.
 4. The scope of information sought by TCC observers and staff during this period covered: 1) the overall post-electoral environment; 2) the Election Commission's impartiality in the performance of its functions; 3) the security situation around the country; 4) potential for conflict.
- 2) Track CA and Government Activity.** The Center lightly tracked the functioning of the government, watching especially for efforts to increase public participation and specifically that of historically marginalized groups such as Madhesis, Janajatis, Dalits and women.
- 3) Engage with national and local political leaders to address political solutions, as appropriate.**
 - a. The Carter Center held multiple meetings at the national level with senior government and political party members (Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, UCPN-Maoist, RPP, RJP, RPP-N, MJF-N, MJF-D, TMLP, Sadbhawana Party, Election Commission of Nepal, Media Representatives, Dalit Representatives, Nepali civil leaders, members of the international community (UNDP, IOM, ICTJ, IFES, ICG, NDI, TAF, UN RCHCO and others), as well as the Governments of the US, UK and Norway to discuss progress on the peace process and constitution drafting and share findings from the observation mission.
 - b. During this period and in regular meetings, interlocutors expressed positive feedback about TCC reports and inquired about TCC findings. They also expressed a desire for continued Carter Center support to the peace process.
- 4) Conduct regular briefing sessions with international stakeholders and coordinate closely with national stakeholders.**
 - a. Due to reduced post-election operations, TCC did not conduct an international stakeholder session or a regional stakeholder session during this quarter.
 - b. Carter Center staff attended three international coordination meetings this period.
 - c. TCC staff continued to meet with the US Government Peace and Democracy Implementers, USAID Democracy and Governance Leadership, IFES, NDI, TAF and PACT.

- 5) **Communicate national findings to the local level.** In lieu of the presence of observers, the Kathmandu headquarters shared the national findings from TCC public reports via email distribution.
- 6) **Ensure gender and social inclusiveness in the project activities, beneficiaries, and staff.**
 - a. 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, women, Janajati, Madhesi, and Muslim staff).

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 conducted a limited observation of the program. The Center’s efforts to observe this process concluded before the beginning of the last quarter, due to the completion of voter registration and the developments of the electoral calendar.

C. ACTIVITY 3: INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

Activity 3 marked The Carter Center’s transition into international election observation. Many elements from Activity 1 continued, and some additional elements were added. The Carter Center was officially invited by the Election Commission of Nepal and Interim Election Council Chair Khil Raj Regmi to deploy international election observers to the November 19, 2013 constituent assembly elections. The Center recruited additional expatriate field staff including a Deputy Field Office Director, Security Analyst, and Legal Analyst. The Center also deployed 12 international long-term observers across Nepal during the previous quarter to gain firsthand knowledge of the activities of the election commission, political parties, civil society organizations, and the international community, as well as other domestic and international election observation missions. The Center concluded its observation of the elections with the departure of all observers during the last quarter and the formal closure of the field office in Kathmandu in February 2014.

1. **Deploy observation teams to provide an impartial assessment of the electoral process.**
The Center had no observers deployed during this period but continued to monitor the political situation from Kathmandu with our remaining expatriate staff.
2. **Direct Interventions by President Carter and/or a former regional leader.**
Continued private and public interventions regarding the election by President Carter and/or a former regional leader on an as-needed basis to reinforce the democratization process in Nepal. These interventions take various forms including phone calls, letters, or visits as necessary. Reports from the field and close collaboration with key stakeholders enable the Center to develop the most effective strategy for well-timed interventions utilizing President Carter and other leaders on the most critical occasions, as appropriate.
 - a. During this reporting period, President Carter penned an op-Ed on the Center’s involvement Nepal over the last seven years. The Op-Ed was released in mid-February to local media and published in Nepali newspapers.

3. Issue regular private and public reports to raise awareness.

The Carter Center did not release any public statements about the elections during this reporting period, though a pre-publication version of the Center's final report on the elections was presented to the ECN on February 19 in Kathmandu. On February 28, The Center released its report on local governance, "The Carter Center Reports That Public Perception of Local Governance in Nepal Has Improved; Undue Influence of Political Parties Continues" which was the culmination of six months of observation beginning in February 2013. The report was released in English and Nepali and distributed to national and regional media.

D. ACTIVITY 4: CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

At the request of USAID, a scoping activity was conducted in the summer of 2012 to determine interest and capacity for a project sustainability initiative. The outcome of that scoping project indicated that the best option was a transfer of the Carter Center's observer database to a local partner. The long-term observation presence in Nepal and almost continuous monitoring of the political process during that time resulted in the Center having a rich database of accumulated information on political developments. The database has recorded all observer data, including transcripts of interviews, meetings and weekly reports, over the life of the project from September 2009 to June 2013. The Carter Center identified a Nepali organization, Social Science Baha, to assume 'ownership' of the database. In accordance with the key outputs of the activity and in preparation for the transfer, staff in Nepal 'cleaned' and redacted the database in August 2013 in order to protect individual identities and any information deemed too sensitive for a public domain. An agreement was reached between USAID, The Carter Center, and Social Science Baha to suspend the activity during the election period so no activity took place from September 2013 to February 2014. The Center is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with Social Science Baha to complete the transfer during the next quarter.

II. Summary of Relevance and Effectiveness

A. During the reporting period, both national and international actors communicated to the Carter Center that its presence in Nepal was relevant and effective. From their perspective, the three main contributions of the Carter Center were: a) keeping pressure on all key actors to move the peace and elections processes 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 and electoral management by the ECN.

III. Summary of Lessons Learned

1. Significant future planning is useful regarding possible report topics and creation of thematic specific reporting forms.
2. The addition of a Kathmandu-based Research, Planning, and Drafting (RPD) team increased the rate of report production and the quality of the reports produced.
3. Strong and targeted outreach to Nepali civil society, non-print media, government officials and political leaders is essential to ensure findings and recommendations are used most effectively.

4. There were opportunities for the Carter Center to use its convening authority in areas where there were gaps in coordination (such as on interim relief to conflict victims) but the Center did not have the staff/resources to be the lead agency, as it was separate from our core project activity.
5. Lack of an organized way to track, access, search, and sort data did create a challenge for the project, given its unexpectedly long-term nature. The creation of a database, where all information and reports can be stored and easily searched, proved to be a valuable asset to the project and contributed to increased report production.

IV. Summary of Staffing Resources and Organisational Issues

V. 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, with the arrival of a new constituent assembly, the future course of the constitutional process and peace process are unclear.
 2. 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 new opportunities for program expansion.
 1. Nothing to report at this time.
- c. Other pertinent information.
 - i. Nothing to report at this time