

CEPPS
Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening



CEPPS Quarterly Report: October 1 – December 31, 2010

NEPAL: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes
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This cover memorandum accompanies the detailed reports submitted by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the “Nepal: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes” program:

I. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Nepal continues to experience intense political polarization and deadlock and increased uncertainty over the formation of the government and drafting of the constitution. In spite of a further seven rounds of prime ministerial elections during this quarter, none were conclusive. Over six months have passed since the one-year extension of the Constituent Assembly tenure on 29 May 2010 and the CA has still not been able to prepare a first draft of the new Constitution, missing the 16 November 2010 deadline. However, on a brighter note, the high level task force of political leaders has discussed and resolved a number of outstanding technical questions and all political parties remain openly committed to meeting the 28 May 2011 deadline for promulgating a new Constitution. The long overdue budget was promulgated on 20 November 2010 through ordinance.

A further significant development has been the government’s decision not to request an extension of UNMIN’s current term past 15 January 2011. As an essential component of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, UNMIN’s departure may be expected to have implications for both the constitution making and the peace process.

During this reporting period the ECN and its voter registration program have continued to be severely disrupted by the ongoing voter registration boycott by Madhes-based parties and the Federal Limbuwan State Council, and ultimately brought to a standstill by Supreme Court injunctions following a series of petitions about the voter registration process.

The ECN and its voter registration program begin the next reporting period in an ongoing state of uncertainty from both a political and legal perspective. Until it is resolved, political disagreement over the process is likely to continue to lead to disruption of voter registration. Although the Supreme Court seemingly ruled in the ECN's favor on the issue of data collection and use of data for the NID program and its right to create a new register from scratch, legally the issue of the use of citizenship certificates as the sole proof of eligibility to register remains unresolved. Furthermore, there are a number of voter registration issues whose legal status is uncertain, which could be subject to a new legal challenge. These could be drip fed into the legal process to continue to disrupt voter registration.

The CEPPS partners have identified the following challenges, organized by program component that will be addressed through this program:

Promote and Strengthen Broader Political Processes

- Organizational weaknesses and the poor governance record of Nepali political parties have led to a loss of public confidence in a multiparty system of democracy.
- Political parties lack internal democratic practices that encourage local party branches and members, including women youth and marginalized groups, to participate in the development of positions on policy issues.
- Political parties lack organized and transparent resource mobilization, and have difficulties in membership recruitment and retention.
- Political parties lack the institutional ability to formulate policy solutions and engage constituents and non-governmental stakeholders in public policy discussions.
- Organizational weaknesses have contributed to the parties' poor electoral preparation and performance. The lack of understanding of citizen concerns and priorities have resulted in party platforms and campaign strategies that were neither relevant nor compelling.
- In preparing for previous elections, candidate selection processes were not transparent, and candidates were not fully aware of their respective parties' policy positions.
- Political parties lack the capacity to plan and organize effective electoral campaigns, and are short on technical and practical resources to conduct campaigns in a competitive political environment.
- There is an underdeveloped culture within civil society and the media of monitoring the activities of political parties.

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

- While the CA election of 2008 was praised a credible electoral process and well managed by the ECN, as expected in the first post-conflict election in a country with as many challenges as Nepal, there were shortcomings and irregularities in the electoral process (voter registration process, limitations of the voter education program, lack of a clear election disputes resolution mechanism).
- In an ongoing spirit of collaboration and transparency, in the post-election period, the ECN undertook a series of post-election evaluations with stakeholders at a national and local level. During the coming years, it will be crucial to maintain the ECN's credibility and build on its institutional capacity to remain a strong pillar in Nepal's ongoing march from war to peace and from a monarchy to a Federal Democratic Republic.

- Although the 2008 general elections were mostly free of violence and administered without widespread problems, shortcomings in Nepal’s election process persist, including: problems with the voter list and registration process; interference from some election and government officials; abuse of state resources for campaign purposes; and an inadequate process to resolve election complaints.
- Given the performance of civil society during previous elections, domestic monitoring groups and the media could play a stronger role in observing the elections and fostering greater transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

Improve the democratic functioning of the Constituent Assembly (CA)/Parliament

- Previous parliaments and the current Constituent Assembly have not been effective in their outreach and representation functions.
- There is a shortage of CA members that with the technical expertise to draft and review proposed legislation.
- With the promulgation of the new constitution and the anticipated shift to a federal system of government, it is likely that many newly elected members will have little or no experience in serving as elected representatives.
- Key bodies within parliament institutions are understaffed and under-resourced. The Parliament Secretariat lacks adequate technical knowledge and material resources to effectively support the legislative process.
- The CA/Parliament conducts few committee hearings and does not have a formalized public consultation process. Little interaction exists between members of the CA/Parliament and their constituents, and this lack of interface breeds gaps in government responsiveness to citizen needs, citizen inclusion in public policy development and the accountability of officials and their use of public resources.
- There is little public information on the latest developments in the constitutional development process and the work of the legislature.

II. OBJECTIVES

The program aims to strengthen political parties, electoral and legislative processes in Nepal. To this end, IFES and NDI would be working to achieve the following specific objectives:

IFES

- Ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- Improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building
- Expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate’s understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- Closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission’s internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.

- Provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

NDI

- Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance.
 - Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organizational structures and operations
 - Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties
- Strengthen the capacity of citizen oversight of the electoral process.
 - Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections
 - Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process
- Support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/ Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.
 - Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the legislature
 - Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

III. ACTIVITIES

A. Promote and Strengthen Democratic Political Processes through Political Party Development Assistance

Effective Political Party Organizing and Outreach

NDI met with the leaders of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Nepali Congress (NC), Tarai Madesh Loktrantik Party (TMLP), and United Communist Party Nepal – Maoists (UCPN-M). The objectives of these meetings were to: provide an overview of NDI's political party development program; highlight NDI's approach to political party assistance; a solicit feedback and support for the various phases of the program: ensure party leadership interest and buy-in; conduct individual political party baseline assessments; and development of a tailored training plan and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each party.

NDI held 52 meetings with nine political parties in 15 districts across Nepal's five developmental regions and the Tarai to conduct individual consultations and assessments of the participating political parties' strengths and weaknesses. NDI has identified the internal organizational structures and operational processes most in need of reform. The Institute also organized group discussions with nongovernmental organization (NGO) and media representatives in each region to solicit independent opinions and analysis about the nature of political party work, political party-civil society relations and political party performance at various regional levels.

On December 29, 2010, with technical support from NDI, IPWA members established sub-committees in Saptari and Sarlahi districts and organized a three-day capacity building training for 40 women activists on women's leadership development.

Cross Party Consensus Building

On November 22, NDI facilitated a working session of a political party advisory committee (PAC) with liaisons from eight parties. During the session the party liaisons discussed the formation of a national political party advisory committee to enhance cross-party consensus building and develop a sense of solidarity among parties around issues of common interest.

B. Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

Technical Assistance to the ECN in the Legal, Management and Technical Aspects of Elections

Throughout this reporting period IFES has analyzed relevant legislation and highlighted the legal and programmatic implications of various voter registration policy options/decisions to the ECN and donor community. Despite a number of challenges such as the absence of a clear legal basis for the ECN's voter registration program, political pressure on the ECN, and some resistance to technical assistance within the ECN, IFES has continued to work to provide management oversight and high level technical guidance on the development and revision of training plans and materials. IFES also organized and funded a two-day residential voter registration evaluation workshop for 53 ECN officials and prepared a workshop report and recommendations, which were incorporated into the planning for phase 2 of voter registration.

Strengthen ECN's Electoral Management Capacity

During this reporting period, IFES has continued to provide significant technical and capacity building support to the ECN in the planning and policy development for its new voter registration with photo project and the implementation of phase 1 of this project. This technical support has been particularly crucial in light of a number of major technical, administrative, political and legal challenges that the ECN has faced with the implementation of this program during this first quarter.

Capacity Building

As part of its ongoing support of the ECN's BRIDGE program, IFES continues to take a lead coordination role working with the Commission and its BRIDGE partners, UNDP and International IDEA, to plan for and implement BRIDGE activities in support of the Commission's ongoing work. IFES funded and organized a three-day BRIDGE program on *Introduction to Electoral Management and Pre-Election Activities* for 21 electoral officials and prepared a bank of interactive and tailored introductory electoral administration materials for future use. IFES' BRIDGE training received extremely positive feedback from ECN staff and work is currently underway to explore possibility of introducing the Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program in Nepal.

Expand and Improve Delivery of Voter Education

During this reporting period, IFES' work to support the ECN with its voter education activities has been limited due to delays in the development and implementation of new voter education activities as a result of the lack of clarity over whether or not citizenship certificates would be the only form of proof of eligibility for voter registration. IFES' national voter education consultant provided voter education capacity building support on an ongoing basis and developed a good working relationship with the ECN voter education team. Phase 1 voter education activities were reviewed ways to improve the ECN's voter education efforts were identified. IFES worked with the ECN to refine the radio and TV PSA scripts and selected companies to carry out production and broadcasting.

C. Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs

Strengthening the Legislative Drafting and Oversight Capacity of Parliament

NDI met with parliamentary committee chairs and secretaries to provide a general overview of the committee program component and gauge interest from the respective committees. NDI and committee chairs reviewed, in detail, the design of the program, including possible topics for workshops and support from NDI for holding committee hearings outside the capital. NDI later discussed with the chairs and staff a variety of legislative topics, including the sub-committee system, quorum requirements, strategic planning and formulation of agendas.

During November and December, NDI held a series of meetings with Manohar Bhattarai, secretary general, and Mukunda Sharma, spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat, to establish a strategic relationship with the parliament. NDI provided the Parliament Secretariat with a two-page description on the parliamentary internship program and details on proposed programs with committees. In addition, NDI shared a draft agenda for a listening workshop with committee chairs. The Parliament Secretariat expressed interest and willingness in partnering with NDI.

NDI facilitated a youth parliamentary group meeting to discuss the possible creation of a parliamentary group aimed at enhancing the role of the young CA members. Altogether, 11 CA members from five political parties and two media representatives participated in the program.

Strengthening the Capacity of the Parliamentary Secretariat

This quarter, TAF held two rounds of discussions with the Secretary General of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament on developing a five-year library improvement plan.

Promoting Dialogue between Elected Members and Their Constituencies

NDI visited the Lalitpur constituency services office to meet Constituency Coordinator Anil Chalise. The coordinator briefed the Institute on the day-to-day activities of the office, his interactions with constituents, actions taken by the office and relations with local officials. NDI also discussed with him the details of a database to track all of the constituents who use the services of the constituency offices.

NDI held consultations with local partner Forum for the Protection of Public Interest (Pro Public) to finalize the selection criteria for local NGOs in the public hearings, community dialogues and round table discussions. Based on the selection criteria, Pro Public and NDI jointly identified and collected information on five potential NGOs from 10 target districts

Supporting Greater Public Awareness and Engagement in the Work of Parliament

TAF and its local partner Interface Nepal, began designing a radio program to inform the public on legislative events and political debates surrounding key legislation. TAF worked with Dalits, Madhesis, women, Janajatis and youth groups to begin drafting interest group audit reports. TAF, working with three local partner NGOs, Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDS), and WomenAct (WA), began preparations to conduct town hall meetings with youth and women in 45 municipalities across Nepal.

IV. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INDICATORS

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY11 Total
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted political party training.	N/A	0	0	
Number of domestic election observers trained with USG assistance.	N/A	0	0	
Number of Laws or Amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance	0	N/A	0	
Number of USG-assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework	2	N/A	2	
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system.	14	N/A	14	
Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance.	0	N/A	0	
Number of electoral officials trained with USG assistance	51	N/A	51	
Number of people reached by USG assisted voter education	0	N/A	0	
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education	0	N/A	0	
Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events.	N/A	0	11	
Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.	N/A	0	0	

V. EVALUATION

Success Stories

Following discussions with Maoists leaders, the Institute met with UCPN-M party activists in five of the 15 districts where it conducted political party assessments. This was a major accomplishment and signaled a discernable change in the Maoist's policy towards working with U.S.-funded projects. Based on several meetings, the Institute noticed that one of the UCPN-M's consistent messages was their interest in collaborating with U.S. and international organizations. However, while the party maintains strict message discipline throughout its ranks, some party activists disagreed on how to best collaborate with international assistance initiatives and next steps in the peace process. The Institute will continue to monitor the UCPN-M's genuine interest in actively cooperating and collaborating with NDI.

Lessons Learned

The level of collaboration and coordination between IFES and UNDP's electoral support program continues to be excellent. However, the need for broader donor coordination and strategizing as to how best support the ECN at this challenging time will be paramount.

The current priority for technical assistance will continue to be in support of the voter registration initiative, which reached crisis point on a number of fronts this reporting period due to deficiencies

in ECN management and budgetary control, political dispute over the use of citizenship certificates as a basis for eligibility to register and legal action through the Supreme Court

Challenges

The ECN secretariat continues to lack electoral management experience and has a convoluted and micro management approach to decision making. Significant capacity building support and appropriately targeted technical assistance will continue to be required from both IFES and UNDP.

The next reporting period will be a challenging one for IFES, UNDP and the ECN due to the ongoing political and legal uncertainty over the registration process. Until the political disagreement is resolved, there is likely to be continued disruption.

The absence of a coherent government coalition, the lack of progress on constitution drafting, the internal divisions and factions within political parties, and continuous party splits have had a negative impact on political parties' ability to strategize, organize and implement relevant political party activities. Parties could not focus on their activities and efforts under this program given the distractions of the volatile political situation. While some party leaders believed they should organize and mobilize their members and supporters through consistent party messaging, others decided to wait until concrete progress was made on the constitution drafting and peace processes before conducting costly outreach activities.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance

NDI will draft nine political party baseline assessment reports and develop PowerPoint presentations on each party to present the assessment findings and outline the areas and needs expressed by the various levels of the party. The Institute will then discuss and design individual political party training plans and MOUs with each party.

NDI will finalize the TOR for the creation of a political party advisory committee with members of nine political parties. The Institute will also organize a formal launch of this entity and work with its members on the development of an action plan and timeline of the issues to be debated, the technical support to be received, and the nature of the activities to be conducted.

NDI will hold consultations with the IPWA and support their expansion through the formation of at least two districts committees and the organization of capacity-building trainings for the newly elected women members.

Freedom Forum will work with Internews' technical consultant to expand out its website to enable election specific content including a monthly media-monitoring bulletin which highlights current trends in the Nepali media in covering the electoral process and the larger process of political reform and development in the country. It will also launch its blog which will comment on the findings of the media monitoring and other trends in the media including threats to journalists who are covering politics.

Internews will launch its program by providing three sub-grants to the Antenna Foundation, Freedom Forum and the Federation of Nepali journalists. Internews will recruit its fulltime project director and as well as its investigative journalism training consultant. Its training consultant will work with the Antenna Foundation to develop a two week training methodology for investigative journalism with a focus on electoral processes and political party development.

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

IFES will conduct regional seminars, trainings and workshops focused on segments of the electoral and party laws and help prepare concept papers and first drafts of the political party and electoral law.

Throughout the next reporting period, IFES will continue to work with the ECN to make preparations for Phases 2 and 3 of voter registration, which will include developing and M&E program and producing enumeration forms. IFES will continue its BRIDGE activities by working with the ECN to develop and implement a six-month tutorial program for core ECN staff using tailored BRIDGE methodology and materials. Various other training programs and briefings to strengthen the electoral management capacity of the ECN will be developed and implemented.

IFES will continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education campaign for the voter registration and identification project, working with the ECN to modify and enhance it for the roll-out of Phases 2 and 3 of the program. IFES will work with selected companies to produce and broadcast radio PSAs and will select and award sub-grants to local civil society organizations to assist the delivery voter education campaigns for phases 2 and 3 of the program.

Finally, IFES will continue to provide the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders with ongoing analysis of the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs

NDI will hold an introductory workshop for committee chairs and staff to discuss international practices, to assess Nepal's experience with effective committee work, and to plan for committee-specific activities.

NDI will consult with the Parliament Secretariat and universities to develop a MOU with partner universities for the parliamentary intern program. In addition, NDI will work with faculties from various universities to solicit applications.

NDI and Pro Public will conduct the first round of public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts.

NDI will organize constituency outreach events in the three constituency offices in Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur.

TAF will complete all 45 town hall consultations with youth and women.

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I. SUMMARY

This reporting period has been marked with the continuation of intense political polarization and deadlock and increased uncertainty over government formation. In spite of a further seven rounds of prime ministerial elections during this quarter, none were conclusive. Over six months have passed since the one-year extension of the Constituent Assembly (CA) tenure on 29 May 2010 and the CA, after missing the 16 November 2010 deadline, has still not been able to prepare a first draft of the new Constitution. On a more positive note, the high level task force of political leaders has resolved a number of outstanding technical questions and all political parties remain openly committed to meeting the 28 May 2011 deadline for promulgating a new Constitution.

The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) continued its implementation of Phase 1 of its voter registration program in 58 municipalities. However, the program was severely disrupted by the ongoing voter registration boycott by Madhes-based parties and the Federal Limbuwan State Council, and ultimately the voter registration program was brought to a standstill on 5 December 2010 by Supreme Court injunctions following a series of petitions about the voter registration process.

As a result of this political and legal turmoil, the major focus of IFES' work in support of voter registration this reporting period has been firefighting and crisis management. Much of IFES' work with the ECN to develop training materials (voter registration handbook, enumerator's handbook, video etc.) and voter education initiatives have had to be reworked numerous times due to lack of clarity as to the way forward. However, in other areas such as electoral legal reform and the implementation of the capacity-building Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) program, good progress has been made.

At this difficult and challenging time, IFES' provision of technical assistance has been crucial. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by IFES' Country Director to analyze relevant legislation and highlight the legal and problematic implications of various voter registration policy options/decisions to the ECN and donor community. In addition, IFES' national training and voter education consultants based at the ECN have established excellent working relationships within the Commission and through ongoing capacity-building are able to make a positive difference in the planning for, and implementation of, voter education and training programs. In addition to this vital capacity-building and technical assistance support, IFES funded and organized a two-day residential voter registration evaluation workshop in November, which brought together 53 ECN staff, including representative district election officers. This workshop identified a number of problems relating to the administrative, technical and legislative aspects of the voter registration program and resulted in a number of recommendations, which are being considered by the ECN for incorporation into the planning for Phase 2 of the program. With regard to voter education, an important IFES-led development has been the collection of data from the district level on FM radio stations and the compilation of an electronic database of this information by region and district. This information

will be used to enable the ECN to more effectively target voter education messages for Phase 2 of the program.

Concept papers for the election dispute resolution, election management body, political campaigns/campaign finance and polling and counting segments of the draft electoral law were prepared by the ECN with substantial technical assistance from IFES's integrated CEPPS III and Norwegian government-funded electoral legal reform support programs. Two public consultation workshops were held with influential high level stakeholders on the concept paper drafts. Input from these workshops has been used to finalise the election dispute resolution concept paper and at the end of the reporting period was being used to finalise concept papers on the other three issues. A revised electoral legal reform timetable has been approved by the ECN which, following strong argument from IFES, retains significant opportunities for public consultation. Through workshop presentations and one-on-one consultations, IFES' staff and legal reform consultant continue to provide knowledge enhancing opportunities to stakeholders and marginalized groups, such as dalits and women, on key issues in Nepal for electoral law reform.

IFES continues to take a lead coordination role working with the Commission and its BRIDGE partners, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International IDEA. This reporting period IFES funded and organized a highly successful three-day *Introduction to Electoral Administration and Pre-Election Activities* residential training program for 21 recently appointed ECN officials. Extremely positive feedback was received from participants and ECN staff continue to stress that BRIDGE training is the most effective of the various trainings ECN staff has received so far. IFES is currently working with the ECN to develop a six-month tutorial-based training program for core ECN staff using tailored BRIDGE materials and methodology. In addition to the BRIDGE training, IFES co-funded with UNDP and took a lead role organizing and facilitating an ECN two-day annual review workshop for 101 ECN staff.

The next reporting period will be a challenging one for the ECN and by association IFES due to the ongoing political and legal uncertainty over the registration process. Until the political disagreement is resolved, there is likely to be continued disruption. The issue of the use of citizenship certificates remains unresolved and there are a number of other voter registration issues whose legal status is uncertain. These issues could be subject to legal challenge, causing further confusion and delays. This will have implications for IFES' planning and likely result in the ECN making requests to IFES for financial and logistical support at very short notice. The level of collaboration and coordination between IFES and UNDP's electoral support program continues to be excellent. However, the need for broader donor coordination and strategizing as to how best support the ECN at this challenging time will be paramount.

II. BACKGROUND

Political Update

This reporting period continues to be marked with the continuation of intense political polarization and deadlock and increased uncertainty over the government formation. In spite of a further seven rounds of prime ministerial elections during this quarter, none were conclusive. The sole prime ministerial candidate, Paudel, failed to get a simple majority due to the neutral position maintained by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN(M)), Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) and the Madhes-parties, asking for a consensus candidate. Over six months have passed since the one-year extension of the CA tenure on 29 May 2010 and the CA has still not been able to prepare a first draft of the new Constitution, missing the 16 November 2010 deadline. However, on a brighter

note, the high level task force of political leaders formed at an all-party meeting on 11 October 2010 has discussed and resolved a number of outstanding technical questions and all political parties remain openly committed to meeting the 28 May 2011 deadline for promulgating a new Constitution. The long overdue budget was promulgated on 20 November 2010 through ordinance.

A further significant development has been the government's decision not to request an extension of the United Nation's Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) whose current term ends 15 January 2011. While the Maoists argued that the extension was necessary for management of cantoned combatants, two ruling parties – Nepali Congress (NC) and UML claim that the Special Committee for Integration can fulfill UNMIN's role. As an essential component of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, UNMIN's departure may be expected to have implications for both the constitution making and the peace process.

During this reporting period the ECN and its voter registration program have continued to be severely disrupted by the ongoing voter registration boycott by Madhes-based parties and the Federal Limbuwan State Council, and ultimately bought to a standstill by Supreme Court injunctions following a series of petitions about the voter registration process.

The Madhes-based party boycott of Phase 1 of the voter registration program is based on the belief that the previous voters list should be used for eligibility to register, not citizenship certificates. The Federal Limbuwan State Council is demanding that the process should start only after the constitution is drafted and the country becomes a federal republic. This ongoing political dispute continued to generate negative publicity and mixed messages in the press and plunged the ECN further into crisis talks with the prime minister, political parties and the Home Ministry.

The petitions lodged at the Supreme Court concern three key issues. First, the issue of the citizenship certificate being the sole proof of eligibility to register. The first petition wanted this struck down and 2007 law applied (allowing a wider range of documents) – this was not determined by the Supreme Court. However, succumbing to pressure from the Madhes-based parties, the ECN widened the scope of identity documents that could be used, thus triggering a second set of petitions requesting the Supreme Court to direct mandatory use of citizenship certificates. On 25 November 2010, the Supreme Court granted an interim order to this effect until it has determined the petitions received against this ECN decision. This case is now joined by women's groups challenging the discriminatory procedures, unsupported by law that the Home Ministry uses for citizenship certificate applications from married women/widows. The issue relating to the use of citizenship certificates was not resolved in the reporting period and the next hearing is due to take place on 19 January 2010.

The second and third issues filed in one petition by Advocate Sunil Ranjan Singh concern the ECN's right to register 16/17 year olds and to pass data on to the Home Ministry for a National Identification (NID) card, and of the ECN's right to create a new register from scratch, thus invalidating *en masse* the registration of all those on the current (2008 CA election) voters register. Underpinning these was a challenge to the exemption of the ECN's voter registration decision from legal challenge.

The Supreme Court granted an interim order on 5 December 2010 directing the ECN to halt its voter registration program. On 23 December 2010, a meeting of the full bench of the Supreme Court lifted the interim order. This was followed by details of the judgment being released early in the next reporting period which made the following orders: The ECN's collection of voters roll with photo data and ancillary data for the NID program is not inconsistent with the law; and, Article 25

of the Voters Roll Act 2006 providing that acts by the ECN in including/excluding names and preparing voters rolls cannot be challenged in court is not inconsistent with Articles 129 and 107 (2) of the Interim Constitution.

The ECN and its voter registration program begin the next reporting period in an ongoing state of uncertainty from both a political and legal perspective. There continues to be political disagreement over the process, which until resolved is likely to continue to lead to disruption of voter registration. Although the Supreme Court seemingly ruled in the ECN's favor on the issue of data collection and use of data for the NID program and its right to create a new register from scratch, legally the issue of the use of citizenship certificates as the sole proof of eligibility to register remains unresolved. Furthermore, there are a number of voter registration issues whose legal status is uncertain, which could be subject to a new legal challenge. These could be drip fed into the legal process to continue to disrupt voter registration.

Program Objectives

Under the Consortium of Elections and Political Strengthening (CEPPS III), IFES activities will support one of the three principal objectives as detailed by USAID: 2) Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants and sub-objectives:

- A) Strengthen democratic legal framework
- B) Strengthen the ECN's electoral management capacity and
- C) Expand and improve delivery of voter education

In support of the above, IFES will achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- To improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building.
- To expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
 - To closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
 - To provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

During this reporting period IFES has provided significant technical and capacity building support to the ECN and other stakeholders in the development, sharing and public review of concept papers for electoral management body, electoral dispute resolution, political campaigns/campaign finance and polling and counting sections of a new electoral law.

Activity 1.1 – Technical Assistance

Summary: IFES has continued to collaborate with the ECN in developing concept papers for the election management body, electoral dispute resolution, political campaign regulation and polling and counting of a new electoral law. IFES' two programs for electoral law reform, one funded under CEPPS III and one funded by the Norwegian government, continue to collaborate closely to maximize coordinated technical inputs and public review opportunities. During the current reporting period IFES CEPPS III program has taken the lead on the electoral management body and polling and counting sections of the electoral law, and provided support to the Norwegian funded IFES program on issues related to the election dispute resolution and political campaign regulation. During this reporting period concept papers on these five issues, drafted under ECN direction with IFES technical assistance, have been produced and revised after public discussion.

IFES had continuing discussions with the ECN's new Joint Secretary/Legal and members of the ECN on the timetable for electoral legal reform. Following the 1 December Legal Reform Steering Committee meeting attended by IFES, a revised Legal Reform Plan and timetable was produced on 3 December. This targeted end-February 2011 as the deadline for producing first drafts of the parts of the electoral laws not affected by undetermined constitutional provisions. At ECN insistence, the new plan reduced the number of public consultations at the concept paper stage and reduced the cycle for development and public review of each segment of the laws to 20 days. ECN does not feel it currently has the capacity or time, given current legal challenges to its voter registration activities, to devote significant resources to public consultations on the future laws, and consultations that remain do so only because of strong argument from IFES representatives on the Steering Committee. This was the third plan for legal reform from the ECN in four months. Hopefully, new senior leadership of the ECN's Legal department will bring greater stability to the legal reform process.

IFES has continued to engage a highly regarded Nepali legal drafter, Kailash Prasad Subedi, to work under Norwegian funding with IFES' Norwegian-funded consultant, Kare Vollan, in advising the ECN, stakeholders and the electoral law drafting subcommittee on the concept papers and drafts of the political party and electoral laws. IFES Country Director has also continued to provide advice to the ECN on electoral legal reform issues. IFES presented a comprehensive world-wide electronic library of electoral and related law to the ECN Legal department.

During this reporting period IFES supported two public review workshops on concept papers for segments of the electoral law. The first, on 18 November, was a one-day workshop on Election Dispute Mechanisms to be included in the new law. UNDP-funded consultant Grant Kippen was the resource person for this workshop, which was attended by 35 senior representatives of political parties, CSOs and government institutions, as well as by all ECN members and the ECN senior management team. Relevant outputs from the workshop's review have been incorporated into the finalized concept paper, which will be used as a guide to draft this segment of the law.

The second, on 26-27 December, was a residential workshop to review concept papers on the election management body, political campaign/campaign finance and polling and counting segments of the law. This IFES/CEPPS III funded workshop was attended by 28 high level representatives of nine major political parties, CSOs, academia and government institutions, as well as by ECN members and the ECN senior management team. At the end of the reporting period the comments and findings of this workshop are being considered for incorporation into the final concept papers on these issues.

Results: Ongoing day-to-day technical advice to the ECN's drafting sub-committee in the development of concept papers for the electoral management body, electoral dispute resolution, political campaigns/campaign finance and polling and counting sections of the draft new electoral law. Holding of two public consultation workshops resulting in inputs from a wide range of knowledgeable and influential stakeholders on the issues in these concept papers. Finalization of concept papers on the electoral management body and election dispute resolution segments of the draft law.

Activity 1.2 – Capacity Building

Summary: IFES has used day-to-day discussions with ECN staff, meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders and meetings of the ECN drafting subcommittee to provide information on international examples of good practice in electoral legal frameworks. During this period IFES has provided international examples and commentaries on legal frameworks for electoral management bodies, electoral dispute resolution and political campaigns/campaign finance to ECN counterparts and representatives from the Home, Law and Attorney-General's ministries involved in the ECN's drafting subcommittee. In addition, IFES has also provided similar expertise on polling and counting processes to the members and staff of the ECN, political leaders as well as government officials. Discussions with IFES on this information have significantly increased knowledge of international good practice.

IFES has also actively participated in programs on the electoral system for marginalized groups such as dalits and women. An interaction program was held for dalit members on November 30; alternatives to ensure dalits fair representation in the new constitution within the proposed electoral systems were discussed. Similarly, an interaction program for the inter-party women alliance, an alliance of multi-party women political leaders, was conducted on December 22; women leaders inquired about the ways to ensure their proportional representation in the new constitution. This work was complemented by further one-on-one meetings with influential figures.

Results: Increased knowledge of the ECN's legal department, drafting subcommittee members and civil society and political party stakeholders of international good practices in legal frameworks for electoral management bodies, electoral dispute resolution, political campaigns/campaign finance and polling and counting. Increased interest by stakeholders in international precedents in electoral laws. Increased knowledge of marginalized groups such as dalits and women on alternatives for an electoral system for Nepal.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

During this reporting period, IFES has provided significant technical and capacity building support to the ECN in the planning and policy development for its new voter registration with photo project

and the implementation of Phase 1 of this project, particularly in relation to training of registration staff.

Activity 2.1 – Technical Assistance

a) Voter Registration

During this reporting period, IFES has continued to provide significant technical and capacity building support to the ECN in the planning and policy development for its new voter registration with photo project and the implementation of Phase 1 of this project. This technical support has been particularly crucial in light of a number of major technical, administrative, political and legal challenges that the ECN has faced with the implementation of this program during this first quarter.

Activity 2.1 – Technical Assistance

b) Voter Registration

Summary: The ECN has split the voter registration with photo program into three phases. In each phase the ECN had planned two parts, with voter registration equipment and trained staff consecutively covering two wards in each municipality/district. Voter registration centers opened for the first phase on 15 September 2010 in 58 municipalities of 43 districts and continued throughout the quarter (although legal challenges and boycotts, which are elaborated on below, hindered the process in a number of municipalities). By the end of the reporting period, 1,285,904 people had been registered, approximately 75% of the ECN's estimated voters (the ECN's estimates of voters for municipalities is 75% of those registered for the 2008 Constituent Assembly election - a relatively low figure when compared to population census estimated projections). At the end of November, registration was announced by the ECN as completed in 44 municipalities, ongoing in 2 municipalities and on-hold in 12 municipalities due to ongoing boycotts of the voter registration process by three Madhes-based parties and the Federal Limbuwan State Council. In the "completed" municipalities, voters can still register at the district election offices. However, very few are using this opportunity.

Against the backdrop of political and legal turmoil relating to the voter registration process as outlined in section II of this report, IFES, working in close partnership with UNDP's Electoral Strengthening Program (UNDP/ESP), has provided ongoing day-to-day technical assistance and advice. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by IFES' Country Director to analyze relevant legislation and highlight the legal and programmatic implications of various voter registration policy options/decisions to the ECN and donor community. The provision of this technical assistance has at times been a frustrating and challenging process and can be attributed to a number of factors: the absence of a clear legal basis for the ECN's voter registration program; the ECN succumbing to political pressure and changing its policy to widen the scope of identity documents as proof of eligibility to register from its previous position of only accepting citizenship certificates; the ECN's ongoing resistance in certain quarters to technical assistance; and finally, uncertainty throughout the reporting period caused by the various petitions to the Supreme Court, culminating in the Court issuing an interim order on 5 December directing the ECN to halt its voter registration program.

As a result of the changing policy decision with regard to use of citizenship certificates, IFES national training consultant, Radhika Regmi, following the departure of the international training consultant, Ian Smith, funded by DanidaHUGOU, has continued to work in close collaboration with

the ECN to provide management oversight and high level technical guidance on the development and revision of training plans and materials (enumerators handbook, registration handbook, training manual for trainers and training video).

In the hope that the materials would be approved at the beginning of the reporting period, IFES secured quotations from printing companies to print 1,000 copies of the registration handbook, 4,400 copies of the enumerators handbook and produce 1,200 copies of the training video in support of Phase 1 of the program. In addition, in response to a request from the ECN, IFES was also poised to assist the ECN with the printing of 5 million enumeration forms for Phases 2 and 3 of the voter registration program. Quotations for all of these print and production jobs had been secured, companies selected and contracts were being prepared when the process was brought to a standstill by the ECN's indecision caused by the various petitions to the Supreme Court, the Commission's change of policy on documentation required for registration and the subsequent order by the Supreme Court to halt the voter registration process altogether. In spite of these challenges, throughout the reporting period IFES' national training consultant has worked in close collaboration with the ECN's training team to ensure that the ECN is aware of and ready to make the necessary changes in the materials, depending on what the Supreme Court's final decision is with regard to documentation required for registration.

Similarly, IFES' national training consultant has worked with the ECN training team on the development of cascade training plans and budgets for Phase 2 of the voter registration program. The draft training plans for Phase 2 were prepared and submitted to the ECN's training and voter education committee for approval. However, due to the abovementioned legal situation, approval of the plans had to be put on hold and will be revisited once a decision has been taken by the Supreme Court, hopefully early in the next reporting period.

A key contribution made by IFES this reporting period was the organization and funding of a two-day residential voter registration evaluation workshop held in Dhulikel on 19 and 20 November 2010. Following the ECN's approval of this proposed workshop by IFES, the national training consultant led on the development of the agenda and preparation of the materials for the workshop. The workshop brought together 53 ECN staff, including representative district election officers, the secretary and all the commissioners. Initially, there had been strong resistance from the ECN to include district election officers in the workshop, but it was finally agreed upon due to IFES' insistence on the value of their inclusion. The highly interactive workshop identified a number of problems relating to the administrative, legislative and technical aspects of the voter registration program, helped facilitate lessons learned from both a head office and field perspective, and resulted in a number of recommendations. The findings from the workshop (see attached workshop report in Annex 1) are being considered by the Commission and some are being incorporated into the planning for Phase 2 of the program, for example the inclusion of CSOs as part of the voter education strategy.

Following this workshop, IFES took a lead role working with the ECN to prepare for a two-day voter registration training program for 101 ECN officials on 12-13 December, which the ECN cancelled at the last minute citing the Supreme Court interim order halting the voter registration process.

As a result of the evolving political and legal crisis and concerns with the ECN's management of the voter registration process, in addition to ECN/donor monthly program coordination meetings, three important donor-led meetings took place. On 11 November 2010, a donor only meeting was held to discuss areas of mounting concern and strategize how best to work with the ECN to address

them. Following this meeting, on 24 November 2010, a donor meeting took place with senior ECN representatives to stress the donors' support of the ECN and the voter registration program, and to discuss the various challenges that the ECN is facing. The meeting raised a number of pre-agreed points by the donors, such as the importance of increased technical assistance and the need for the ECN to refrain from entering into political disputes and let the relevant government ministry deal with the issues, in particular, the Ministry of Home Affairs on the issue of citizenship certificates. At a subsequent donor meeting on 8 December, chaired by UNDP, it was agreed that it was not appropriate at this stage to take specific action to place pressure on the government on these issues, though the citizenship certificate issue should be raised in a meeting with the Home Ministry. IFES worked closely with UNDP to prepare briefing materials for donors for these meetings.

On 20 November, the Government of Nepal made the long awaited announcement of its contribution of \$13,134,560 million to the voter registration program, bringing total funds received for the project to \$25,393,204, leaving a budget shortfall of \$4.16 million. UNDP will continue to take a lead role, working with the ECN to secure the additional necessary funds. In addition, IFES research in November when most of Phase 1 of the voter registration operation was completed, showed that if the ECN continues to expend money at the rate it has for Phase 1, it will spend approximately \$28 million on staff costs alone. This is something that the ECN is currently working to address as part of its planning process for the remainder of the voter registration program.

On 23 December the Supreme Court lifted the order restraining the ECN from registering voters. However, the interim order restraining the ECN from implementing its policy of allowing proof of eligibility other than a citizenship certificate remained in effect as at the end of the reporting period, and will not be resolved until mid January 2011 at the earliest. Due to these factors the ECN's resource planning and preparations for training, outreach policies and materials for the voter registration program have been in a state of flux. Preparation for Phase 2 in the Village Development Committees (VDCs) in 56 districts has been put on hold, though the ECN's intention is to start Phase 2 within 4 weeks of a Supreme Court decision on the citizenship certificate issue. This would require a staged and very sophisticated roll out in order to acquire materials and train staff in time. As a contingency measure, at the end of December the ECN commenced planning for a 'bridging' voter registration program, using equipment, materials and staff already in the field to register voters in VDCs within the same districts containing the municipalities covered during registration Phase 1. Citizenship certificates would be required as proof of eligibility. After the end of this reporting period (10 January 2011), ECN announced that enumeration for this "bridging" program would commence on 25 January 2011, allowing little time for preparation.

There is no doubt that the ECN, and by association IFES, faces a challenging time ahead. The ECN has to deal with three significant voter registration issues which can be summarized as: *administrative* – especially how to deal with tailoring the remainder of the program to the finance available; *technological* - especially the system architecture and the sustainability of central voter registration operations and *legal /political* – the current Supreme Court challenges voter registration process and potential future legal petitions which could further derail the process. In light of this, ongoing technical assistance from IFES and acceptance of technical assistance by the ECN, together with coordinated and collaborative donor support is crucial.

Results: Provision of ongoing high level technical assistance, analysis and guidance; revision of training materials (enumerators handbook, registration handbook, training manual for trainers and training video) and development of cascade training plans initially for Phase 2 of the program, and

then the “*bridging program*” due to the legal situation; organization and funding of a two-day residential voter registration evaluation workshop for 53 ECN officials, a workshop report prepared and recommendations incorporated into the planning for Phase 2; ongoing collaboration and excellent working relationships established with the ECN voter registration training team; \$13 million contribution from the Government of Nepal for the voter registration initiative; positive donor coordination to support the ECN and help it address the significant challenges ahead.

Activity 2.2 – Capacity Building

a) Implementing a Program of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

Summary: As part of IFES’ ongoing support of the ECN’s BRIDGE program, IFES continues to take a lead coordination role working with the Commission and its BRIDGE partners, UNDP and International IDEA, to plan for and implement BRIDGE activities in support of the Commission’s ongoing work.

During this reporting period IFES organized and funded a three-day *Introduction to Electoral Management and Pre-Election Activities* residential training in Dhulikel from 13 – 15 December 2010. The training was attended by 21 recently appointed ECN staff (all male), from ECN headquarters and districts around Nepal. IFES worked with the ECN BRIDGE team to put together an intensive but highly participatory introductory electoral administration program, covering topics such as what constitutes free and fair elections, electoral framework principles and international electoral standards. It also covered more practical sessions on electoral systems, operational planning, voter education, and culminating in a polling and counting simulation exercise (See Annex 2 for Program Agenda). IFES’ Deputy Country Director, Katie Ryan, a fully accredited BRIDGE facilitator worked with the ECN team to prepare the materials and run a number of sessions (international electoral standards, guiding principles of election management, voter education and operational planning), and IFES’ Country Director, Alan Wall, attended as a guest speaker to present sessions he had prepared on electoral systems and electoral management bodies. Feedback received from the training was excellent. ECN staff continue to stress that the BRIDGE training is the most effective of the various ECN training programs – something that is also highlighted in the UNDP sponsored training assessment of the ECN which is based on interviews with many ECN staff.

Based on feedback and the further training requirements highlighted by ECN staff at the December BRIDGE training, IFES and the ECN are looking to work together over the next six months to prepare and deliver regular tutorials on identified electoral topics, using tailored BRIDGE materials and methodology. This will be further discussed early in the next reporting period and incorporated into the 2011 BRIDGE calendar, which will be approved early in 2011.

In addition to the ECN wholeheartedly embracing the BRIDGE program, a number of other significant developments took place during the reporting period that have positive repercussions on the long-term sustainability and success of the BRIDGE program in Nepal. The ECN finally agreed to pay for the remuneration of the ECN’s BRIDGE facilitators, something the BRIDGE partners had not been willing to do. Secondly, the ECN has designated a special BRIDGE training facility in its soon to be constructed Electoral Education and Information Centre, funded by the Australian government. Finally, the ECN has indicated that it is willing to fully fund at least one BRIDGE training workshop in 2011.

In addition to IFES' ongoing work with Elections' BRIDGE, IFES has taken a lead role in coordinating with other possible partners such as DanidaHUGOU, World Bank and International IDEA to introduce a pilot to Nepal of the recently developed Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program. Negotiations are currently underway with the Australian Election Commission (which is leading on the development of the Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program) a view to a pilot being held in Nepal in May 2011.

Results: IFES funded and organized a three-day BRIDGE program on *Introduction to Electoral Management and Pre-Election Activities* for 21 electoral officials (male) and prepared a bank of interactive and tailored introductory electoral administration materials for future use. BRIDGE training highlighted as the ECN's most effective training and wholehearted support from the ECN staff and senior management for an ongoing BRIDGE program in Nepal. Draft 2011 BRIDGE calendar prepared for approval early in 2011. Positive steps towards the long-term sustainability of BRIDGE. Work underway to explore the potential of introducing the Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program to Nepal.

a) Organizational Capacity Building

Summary: IFES' Country and Deputy Country Director continue to provide organizational capacity building support on specific initiatives and through ongoing interactions with ECN staff. In addition, the work of IFES' national training consultant, based full-time in the ECN, continues to be instrumental in demonstrating good practices in training development and management processes to often inexperienced ECN secretariat managers. Through collaborative work, collection and archiving of materials and daily professional interactions, the training capacity of individuals in the ECN has been increased, and the ECN is starting to develop a more systematic approach to planning and implementing a cascade training program. The national training consultant has established an excellent training relationship with the ECN training team and senior ECN management.

In addition to this ongoing organizational capacity-building, in November, IFES' national training consultant took a lead role, working with the ECN training team to prepare the material for and facilitate a two-day ECN Review workshop which took place on 10 and 11 December 2010. The review workshop, co-funded by IFES and UNDP, brought together 101 ECN staff, including 74 district election officials, the commissioners, secretary, joint secretary, under secretaries and other officers and support staff. The workshop, which had a strong team-building focus, mainly focused on a review of the annual program of the district election officials and voter registration activities.

Following the training assessment carried out by UNDP, IFES will work with UNDP early in 2011 to draft an organizational capacity building program, which will include topics such as project and budget management, project proposal writing, negotiation, operational planning etc.

Results: More professional approaches to developing training programs are being adopted by the ECN secretariat. IFES financial and substantive support of ECN two-day annual review workshop held on 10 and 11 December 2010 for 101 ECN headquarters and district staff.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

During this reporting period, IFES' work to support the ECN with its voter education activities has been limited due to the halt, early in the reporting period, of the development and implementation of new voter education activities due to the lack of clarity over whether or not citizenship certificates would be the only form of proof of eligibility for voter registration. In spite of this, IFES' national

voter education consultant has worked with the ECN to provide technical and capacity building support wherever possible.

Activity 3.1 Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

Summary: The current ECN voter education is comprised of staff members who are dealing with electoral matters for the first time and have no public information/media background or experience. It is clear that the ECN continues to require significant support in the preparation of integrated voter education campaigns. An improvement, however, was the establishment of a dedicated ECN voter education team within the Secretariat in the last reporting period, and in this reporting period, the subsequent appointment of a Joint Secretary who is solely responsible for voter education and training for voter registration. This has made working modalities with the ECN more effective..

IFES' national voter education consultant has established excellent working relationships within the ECN and has continued to provide capacity building support on a day-to-day basis. This has involved working with the ECN to review the voter education for Phase 1 of the program and identify ways to improve the voter education effort for Phase 2. In addition, the national voter education consultant has worked with the voter education team to develop motivational messages for political parties and the media. The consultant has also worked closely with IFES' national training consultant and the ECN's training team to ensure that key voter education messages are included in any revisions of the training materials.

Throughout the reporting period and in advance of Phase 2 of the voter registration program, a key thrust of IFES' voter education capacity-building work has been to help facilitate the ECN's ability to work directly with local radio companies and broadcast radio PSAs in local areas at optimal listening times, capitalizing on the fact that radio has the greatest audience reach in Nepal. The national voter education consultant coordinated with the ECN to collect and compile the details of FM stations at the district level through the district election officers. IFES has compiled the information in an electronic database by region and district for 70 out of the 75 districts. The information from the remaining 5 districts is currently being collected. Using this information as part of the voter education strategy for Phase 2 of the voter registration program, IFES will be able to directly contract local radio stations and help the ECN more effectively target voter education messages at the local level. In addition to this, the consultant worked closely with the ECN to identify those media agencies which can broadcast in 8 languages (Gurung, Nepali, Tamang, Nepal Bhasha-Newari, Maithili, Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Tharu) for the Phase-2 voter education program.

The IFES funded and organized ECN voter registration evaluation workshop held on 19 and 20 November 2010. IFES identified a number of gaps in the voter education strategy for Phase 1, such as the need for a longer voter education period; the need to involve civil society organizations and be more strategic and target more effectively the voter education materials and messages. It is hoped that the ECN will incorporate these recommendations into its planning for Phase 2.

Results: National voter education consultant providing voter education capacity building support on an ongoing basis and good working relationship established with the ECN voter education team. Review of Phase 1 voter education activities carried out and ways to improve the ECN's voter education efforts identified. Motivational messages developed for political parties and the media. Electronic database of information on FM radios stations in 70 of the 75 districts compiled following feedback from the district election officers. Media agencies identified who are able to broadcast in 8 different languages.

Activity 3.2 Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

Summary: Findings from IFES' survey of the pilot phase of the voter registration project carried out under CEPPS II indicated that young Nepali citizens aged between 16 and 25 had a low participation rate of around 40%, the overwhelming reason being that they did not have a citizenship certificate¹. In recognition that this target group needs to be specifically addressed, with IFES support the ECN prepared scripts for a radio and TV PSA to be used to reach and motivate this important young audience, as well as the general public, with a message focusing on the fact that all eligible voters need to have a citizenship certificate in order to register.

Early in the reporting period IFES worked with the ECN to refine the radio and TV PSA scripts. The ECN requested IFES' assistance with the production and broadcasting of the radio and TV PSAs with the aim of broadcasting them in parallel, initially for a one month period starting on 15 October, to cover the final weeks of Phase 1 of the voter registration project. As a result, IFES had gone through an urgent tender and selection process for the production and broadcast companies and had selected the companies to carry out the work. Work was underway with the selected broadcast companies to finalize the media schedule and the location and actors for the TV PSA were selected. However, the day before filming for the TV PSA was due to begin, the ECN decided to halt both the TV and radio PSA due to the uncertainty over the citizenship certificate issue.

At the end of this reporting period, IFES hired a national staff member, Suraj Sigdel, who will lead IFES' voter education work with local CSOs. Work began to map organizations working on civic education, youth mobilization, women's empowerment, and other organizations engaged in voter education. IFES will select and prepare sub-grants to civil society organizations to develop and deliver voter education campaigns for Phases 2 and 3.

Results: TV and radio PSAs script targeting young people finalized. Companies selected to carry out the production and broadcasting of the Radio PSAs. Work underway to map potential civil society partners to support the ECN's voter education efforts for Phases 2 and 3 of the voter registration program.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

Activity 4.1 – Ongoing Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

Summary: IFES continued monitoring, analyzing and reporting on the progression of electoral related developments with regard to the Constituent Assembly and ECN activities. Regular reports on program activity and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided verbally and in writing to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID and other relevant stakeholders. A major focus this reporting period has been on the provision of at least weekly updates to relevant international stakeholders on the voter registration process, as well as presentations/briefings to the Carter Center, USAID, the Norwegian Embassy and DanidaHUGOU.

Results: U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings. Weekly updates and briefings to relevant international stakeholders on the voter registration process.

¹ Findings from IFES' assessment survey of the pilot phase of voter registration project – July 2010

Activity 4.2 – Provision of News Clipping Service

Summary: IFES Nepal continued to deliver its daily news clipping service throughout the reporting period. This service is a compilation of online news reports that are relevant to the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal. News reports are taken from the major news outlets in Nepal, such as the *Kathmandu Post* and the *Himalayan Times* as well as other reputable online sources of news and analysis on Nepali politics.

Results: Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity

Nothing to report this reporting period.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the reporting period the IFES Nepal program has achieved the following major results:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Technical Assistance

- Continuous technical assistance to the ECN’s drafting sub-committee in the development of concept papers for the electoral management body, electoral dispute resolution, political campaigns/campaign finance and polling and counting sections of the draft new electoral law.
- Holding of two public workshops with a wide range of knowledgeable and influential stakeholders to discuss ECN drafting sub-committee’s concept papers.
- Finalization of concept papers on the electoral management body and election dispute resolution segments of the draft law.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Increased knowledge of ECN’s legal department, drafting subcommittee members and civil society and political party stakeholders of international good practices in legal frameworks for electoral management bodies, electoral dispute resolution, political campaigns/campaign finance and polling and counting. Increased interest by stakeholders in international precedents in electoral laws.
- Increased knowledge of marginalized groups such as dalits and women on alternatives for an electoral system for Nepal.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Technical Assistance

- Provision of ongoing high level technical assistance, analysis and guidance.
- Revision of training materials (enumerator’s handbook, registration handbook, training manual for trainers and training video) and development of cascade training plans initially for Phase 2 of the program, and then the “*bridging program*” due to the legal situation.

- Organization and funding of a two-day residential voter registration evaluation workshop for 53 ECN officials, a workshop report prepared and recommendations incorporated into the planning for Phase 2.
- Ongoing collaboration with the ECN voter registration training team.
- Effective donor coordination to support the ECN in addressing current challenges.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Conduct of a three-day BRIDGE program on *Introduction to Electoral Management and Pre-Election Activities* for 21 electoral officials using interactive and tailored introductory electoral administration materials available for future use.
- BRIDGE training proves to be ECN's most effective training program that received wholehearted support from the ECN staff and senior management for an ongoing BRIDGE program in Nepal.
- Work underway to explore the potential of introducing the Democracy and Governance BRIDGE program to Nepal.
- IFES financial and substantive support of ECN two-day annual review workshop held on 10 and 11 December 2010 for 101 ECN headquarters and district staff.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

- Provision of continuous voter education capacity building support to the ECN team through IFES national voter education consultant.
- Review of Phase 1 voter education activities carried out and ways to improve the ECN's voter education efforts identified.
- Development of motivational messages for political parties and the media.
- Electronic database of information on FM radios stations in 70 of the 75 districts compiled following feedback from the district election officers.
- Media agencies identified who are able to broadcast in 8 different languages.
- TV and radio PSAs script targeting young people finalized.
- Companies selected to carry out the production and broadcasting of the Radio PSAs.
- Work underway to map potential civil society partners to support the ECN's voter education efforts for Phases 2 and 3 of the voter registration program.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

- U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings. Weekly updates and briefings to relevant international stakeholders on the voter registration process.
- Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

For the next quarter IFES will focus on the following activities:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

- Organize three regional seminars on segments of the electoral and party laws including electoral dispute resolution, electoral management bodies and campaign finance.
- Conduct national seminar on consolidated concept papers for the electoral law.

- Prepare first drafts of the political party law and the electoral law.
- Conduct workshops with various stakeholders on electoral and party law drafts.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

- Amend, produce and distribute the voter registration training and reference materials drafted in the previous period for the remainder of the voter registration program.
- Assist the ECN with the implementation of the “bridging” registration program.
- Assist the ECN with planning and delivery of cascade training sessions for Phase 2 of the voter registration project, especially with training of trainers.
- Assist ECN to produce enumeration forms for Phases 2 and 3 of voter registration.
- Assist ECN to develop and implement an M&E program for the voter registration project.
- Continue to monitor and work with the ECN to improve the policy framework and implementation of the voter registration project.
- With UNDP ESP assist the ECN to develop a response to the UNDP ESP-funded ECN Training Needs Assessment.
- Implement selected priority capacity-building training stemming from the Training Needs Assessment, such as project management training.
- Continue to work with the ECN to improve the professionalism of planning and delivery of nation-wide cascaded training programs for ECN temporary staff.
- Develop and implement a series of briefings for ECN stakeholders, including political parties and media.
- Finalize the 2011 BRIDGE calendar and work with the ECN to develop and implement a six-month tutorial program for core ECN staff using tailored BRIDGE methodology and materials.
- Continue to work with the ECN to ensure gender inclusion is taken into account in programmatic activities and the implementation of the recommendations from the gender mapping assessment, following the ECN’s approval of the report which is anticipated early in the next reporting period.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN’s voter education campaign for the voter registration and identification project, working with the ECN to modify and enhance it for the roll-out of Phases 2 and 3 of the program. IFES will work with selected companies to produce and broadcast radio PSAs in multiple languages and a TV PSA for selected target groups, as well as directly contracting local radio stations to help the ECN more effectively target voter education messages at the local level.
- IFES will enhance the voter education effort to date through the selection and award of sub-grants to local civil society organizations to assist the delivery voter education campaigns for Phases 2 and 3 of the program.

4. Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting on the Electoral Process

- Ongoing analysis provided to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

- The ECN secretariat continues to lack electoral management and decision-making experience. This has become increasingly evident through the implementation of Phase 1 of the voter registration program and the planning of Phase 2. Significant capacity building support and

appropriately targeted technical assistance is required from both IFES and UNDP. Certain quarters in the ECN resist the provision of technical assistance from national and international consultants. Having initially been positive about having an IFES funded monitoring and evaluation consultant, the ECN is now resisting this. . Furthermore, the return of the international voter education and training consultants is being blocked. However, on a more positive note, IFES' national training and voter education consultants, who have been working with the ECN for six months, have established productive and collaborative working relationships and through ongoing capacity-building on a day-to-day basis are making a positive difference to the work. The current priority for technical assistance continues to be in support of the voter registration initiative, which reached crisis point on a number of fronts this reporting period due to deficiencies in ECN management and budgetary control, political dispute over the use of citizenship certificates as a basis for eligibility to register and legal action through the Supreme Court, which brought the whole process to a standstill.

- Due to the above mentioned management, political and legal problems, the focus of IFES' work this reporting period has been firefighting and crisis management. The postponement of Phase 2 of the voter registration program has meant that a number of activities that were planned for this quarter, such as the series of media trainings for ECN staff and media representatives, have had to be postponed until the ECN is more certain about its plans for future activities.
- IFES has established some good working relationships and allies, particularly with the new Joint Secretary responsible for voter education and training. The Joint Secretary exhibits sound judgment and understands the fundamental requirements for effective training and voter education programs. IFES will continue to develop alliances within the ECN and work with UNDP to help improve the Commission's planning and decision making process.
- The next reporting period will be a challenging one for IFES, UNDP and the ECN due to the ongoing political and legal uncertainty over the registration process. Until the political disagreement is resolved, there is likely to be continued disruption. The issue of the use of citizenship certificates remains unresolved and there are a number of other voter registration issues whose legal status is uncertain which could be subject to legal challenge, causing further confusion and delays. This will have implications for IFES' planning and likely result in the ECN making requests to IFES for financial and logistical support at very short notice. The level of collaboration and coordination between IFES and UNDP's electoral support program continues to be excellent. However, the need for broader donor coordination and strategizing as to how best support the ECN at this challenging time will be paramount.
- IFES has now recruited new staff members (National Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, National Project Coordinator and Office Secretary) under the CEPPS III award. These additional human resources will enable IFES to build local capacity and increase the scope of its work.

Attachments

Annex 1. Workshop Report on ECN Voter Registration Evaluation Workshop

Annex 2. Introduction to Election Management and Pre-Election Activities BRIDGE Agenda

**CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report
October 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010**

**Project Dates: August 3, 2010–August 31, 2015
Total budget: \$14,422,000 Expenses to date: \$584,356**

I. SUMMARY

With the parliament failing to elect a new prime minister this quarter, Nepal has been without an effective government since June 30, 2010. The widening rift between the three major parties continued to paralyze the fragile peace process and stalled the constitution drafting process. On November 23, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) issued a warning on behalf of international donors that the continued political impasse may limit future development assistance and money. Meanwhile, the United Nations Mission in Nepal announced in September that it would not extend its mandate in Nepal beyond January 15, 2011. Nepal now has less than five months before the second deadline to promulgate a new constitution.

Despite the political uncertainty and lack of progress in forging consensus between party leadership, the National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) along with subgrant partners Internews and The Asia Foundation (TAF), began the first full quarter of programming to strengthen democratic political processes in Nepal. The program, titled “*Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPELP)*,” seeks to promote political party development, strengthen capacity for citizen oversight of the electoral process, and support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly / Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.

During this quarter, NDI met with political party leaders and local party officials in 15 districts across Nepal to conduct baseline assessments. Information gathered from these consultations will be used to tailor NDI’s technical assistance to individual party needs. The Inter Party Women’s Alliance (IWPA) continued their sub-committee expansion and trained more than 100 women in rural Nepal to lobby and organize for greater rights and representation. NDI also met with committee chairs and secretaries in parliament and met with young Constituent Assembly (CA) members to form a parliamentary youth group. TAF began consultations with various marginalized groups to prepare for the drafting of interest group audit reports

Next quarter, the Institute will present its party assessment findings to each of the nine political parties and develop individualized party action plans. NDI and its local partner will conduct the first round of public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts and will organize constituency outreach events in three NDI-supported constituency offices. Internews will begin its program activities and TAF will complete town hall consultations in 45 towns across Nepal. In addition, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation assessment tools will be created to collect baseline data for individual program components. This information will be used to track and analyze program progress throughout the life of the grant.

II. BACKGROUND

Six months after the resignation of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, and after 16 unsuccessful rounds of voting in the Constituent Assembly (CA), the country remains paralyzed between an ineffective caretaker government and intransigent political leaders. The constitutional system dictates that the prime ministerial polls continue until a candidate wins a simple majority in the CA or until all candidates pull out. With the major parties remaining locked in an unrelenting power

struggle, the Nepali Congress (NC) consistently ruled out withdrawing Ram Chandra Poudel's lone candidacy. On December 17, the Supreme Court ruled that the decision of some parties to abstain or remain neutral in the previous rounds of voting was unconstitutional.

In mid-November, the sixth Maoist plenum took place over a seven-day period in Palungtar, a remote village in Gorkha. Internal divisions within the Maoist party persisted as Party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his two deputies openly disagreed over the future direction of the party and the peace process. This lack of a clear and consensual vision for Nepal's future continued across Nepal's political leadership.

Over the last two months, the formation of a high-level taskforce headed by UCPN-M Chairman Dahal resolved 70% of the disputed issues related to statute drafting in the constitution, yet the three major parties remained deadlocked on the document's most fundamental questions. Issues as yet undecided included: whether Nepal should have a presidential or prime ministerial form of government; the number of states in a federal republic; whether the judiciary should be controlled by parliament; and whether parliament should be unicameral or bicameral.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) announced in September that it would not extend its mandate in Nepal beyond January 15, 2011. In preparation, the caretaker government attempted to transfer UNMIN's responsibilities of monitoring the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Nepal Army to a special committee, the Army Integration Special Committee. With UNMIN's impending withdrawal, little time remained to find a permanent solution to contentious issues such as the integration and rehabilitation of nearly 20,000 Maoist combatants. While the UN would not be directly involved in the peace process starting January 15, it would continue to monitor the state of Nepal's peace process for three years.

On December 20, a six-member military delegation, headed by Indian Army General Vijay Kumar Singh, began a three-day visit to Nepal. The Indian Army General met his counterpart General Chhatraman Singh Gurung to discuss security concerns, including Nepal's role in combating international terrorism and criminal activities along the open border between the two countries. Following the tradition between the two armies to honor each other's army chiefs as honorary generals of their own armies, President Ram Baran Yadav conferred the honorary title Nepal Army General on General Singh. General Singh received an insignia, a sword and a citation.

As political leaders in Nepal remained uncompromising, NDI found lower-level party officials and political actors eager to work together. The Institute and its partners began the first full quarter of activities in the new SPELP program eager to promote political party development, strengthen capacity for citizen oversight of the electoral process, and support the institutional strengthening of the Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs. At the start of the quarter, NDI met with a number of political party representatives to gain buy-in from party leaders and begin party baseline assessments.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Political Party Development

NDI's political party development component is based on continuing coordination and consultation between the Institute and the parties to ensure that all assistance activities respond to the individual needs identified by each party and to any changes in Nepal's political context or legal framework. This quarter, NDI met with representatives from a number of parties in Kathmandu and throughout

Nepal to conduct baseline assessments and discuss the creation of an inter-party dialogue mechanism. The Institute also met with international donor representatives to discuss program collaboration and continued to support the Inter Party Women’s Alliance expansion to remote districts.

Political Party Leadership Meetings

This quarter, NDI met with the leaders of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, CPN-UML, Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Nepali Congress (NC), Tarai Madesh Loktrantik Party (TMLP), and United Communist Party Nepal – Maoists (UCPN-M) (Table 1). The objectives of these meetings were to: provide an overview of NDI’s political party development program; highlight NDI’s approach to political party assistance; solicit feedback and support for the various phases of the program: ensure party leadership interest and buy-in; conduct individual political party baseline assessments; and development of a tailored training plan and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each party. All party leaders expressed their interest and willingness to collaborate with the Institute on the baseline assessment by facilitating meetings with their local party activists.

Table 1: Party Leadership Meetings

Date	Party	Name
Oct. 1	RPP	Pashupati SJB Rana, President Bhuwan Pathak, Head, Internal Training Unit
Oct. 7	CPN-UML	Jhal Nath Khanal, Chairman
Oct. 11	CPN-ML	Hon. C.P. Mainali, General Secretary Kumar Belbase, Polit Bureau
Oct. 13	NC	Sunil Bhandari, Head, Training Unit Hon. Sita Gurung, CCM
Nov. 23	TMLP	Mahanta Thakur, President Brijesh Lal Chandra, Vice-President Hon. Govinda Chaudhary, Minister of Education
Dec. 7	UCPN (Maoist)	Hon. Pampha Bhusal, CCM Hon. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Head, International Relations

Political Party Baseline Assessments across 15 Districts

NDI held 52 meetings with nine political parties in 15 districts across Nepal’s five developmental regions and the Tarai (Table 2) to conduct individual consultations and assessments of the participating political parties’ strengths and weaknesses. NDI has identified the internal organizational structures and operational processes most in need of reform.

To do this, NDI developed a questionnaire used in assessment interviews with party representatives. This process was informed by the Institute’s “Guide to Conducting a Political Party Baseline Assessment,” a tool that builds on assessment activities not merely with written surveys but as opportunities for participatory dialogue with both party leadership as well as the membership, and representatives of youth and women wings in the party. The questionnaire was adapted to the Nepali context and political environment.

By working with individual parties, taking into account their respective level of development and capacity, and identifying areas where they need targeted assistance, NDI will be able to develop

individualized training plans, which include workshops, training and consultations that respond to the particular needs of each party.

The Institute also organized group discussions with nongovernmental organization (NGO) and media representatives in each region to solicit independent opinions and analysis about the nature of political party work, political party-civil society relations and political party performance at various regional levels.

1. Eastern Region

From October 24 to 29, NDI staff, accompanied by USAID Agreement Officer's Technical Representative Bishnu Adhikari, traveled to the Eastern region of Nepal and met with local party activists representing the NC, CPN-UML and RPP. The Institute also met with NGO and media representatives in Dhankuta and Terhatum districts. In addition to gathering information about the structure and operations of political parties in these districts, the meetings fostered closer relationships with local party members and NGO staff and promoted greater local buy-in, involvement and ownership towards the program.

In general, NDI noticed highly centralized party operations and an absence of a consistent internal or external communication processes. While the NC and CPN-UML were better than the other parties surveyed with regards to organizational and outreach capacity, no party member was able to articulate the party's message or discuss its policies on issues of regional interest and concern.

“Political parties are preoccupied with power and focus on their personal interests; they don't have policies and have no agenda to solve issues.” NGO representative, Dhankuta, October 24, 2010.

“What we're missing is leadership and guidance from the central level. We're forgotten out here; no direction, no resources, no attention.” RPP representative, Dhankuta, October 25, 2010.

2. Central Region

From November 1 to 4, NDI staff, accompanied by USAID Democracy and Governance Officer David Billings, traveled to Kavrepalanchok and Dolakha districts in the Central region and met with local party activists representing the NC, CPN-UML, CPN-ML and RPP. NDI noticed highly centralized party operations and poor communication practices. Similar to findings in the Eastern region, the NC and CPN-UML had a slightly higher organizational capacity relative to the other party members interviewed, but overall, none of the party members could communicate their party's platform or specific party message.

The Institute also met with NGO representatives to solicit their opinions about local issues, political party work in their district and the nature of the civil society-political party relationship. NDI noticed an active and vibrant civil society, which has received significant funds from international organizations and donors and is engaged in a number of local initiatives. Their general view of political parties was based on the perception that parties talk about issues but do not have plans to solve them.

“We look forward to participating in your programs, and are grateful that an INGO came to meet with us here at the district level.” CPN-UML activist, Charikot, November 2, 2010.

“Politics is not a dirty game, but political party officials are. People are innocent and taken advantage of.” Woman NGO representative, Charikot, November 3, 2010.

3. Far-West and Mid-West Regions

From November 27 to December 5, NDI staff conducted 19 local consultations and assessments and met with 14 representatives of civil society organizations in five districts in the Mid-West and Far-West regions. In contrast to the Eastern region of the country, NDI noticed a strong presence of the Maoist party in the Far-Western region, with local parties reporting greater insecurity and threats of violence. NDI learned that money extortion, abductions and disruption of activities organized by other parties were still ongoing practices in various villages in this region.

Overall, meetings with political parties in these two regions highlighted a communication gap between the central and district levels and a lack of a clear party strategy to increase membership, train current members, and a lack of plans or policies to address citizens’ issues and concerns.

In addition to discussions with the NC, CPN-UML, CPN-ML, and RPP, NDI also met with Madesh-based parties. The Madesh MJF-N (D) party proved to be much better organized than their counterparts in the region. The party offered a consistent message to its growing membership, better communication between the central and district level offices and promoted membership to marginalized groups, such as Dalits, Muslims Janjatis.

“What we need from our central level is a message of unity. NC came out united after the convention, but we still hear of disunity and internal division at the local level. This does not help us in presenting a strong image of the party here.” NC activist, Bhairahwa, November 28, 2010.

“We need help with our internal party communication. We want to know what the party stance is on current issues so that we can inform people in our district and have a unified message.” CPN-UML activist, Banke, November 30, 2010.

“Parties are not internally democratic, so you can’t expect good governance from parties in government and parliament if parties are not democratic themselves.” NGO representative, Banke, November 30, 2010.

4. Western Region

From December 8 to 11, NDI staff traveled to the Western region and conducted 10 meetings with local party activists from the UCPN-M, NC, CPN-UML, CPN-ML, and RPP. The Institute covered three districts and conducted consultations and assessments of local political party branches and met with representatives of civil society organizations.

NDI met with the UCPN-M for the first time in these districts after receiving approval from the Maoist leadership. In general, Maoist local party activists welcomed NDI and expressed their appreciation for the Institute's assistance and the solicitation of their opinions. They stated that the Institute's experience in 60 countries would be helpful in Nepal, and emphasized that their goal was to improve the lives of disadvantaged citizens and minorities through changes in the laws and enacting of new legislation. They expressed interest in programmatic areas that enhanced consensus building among parties on important transitional issues such as constitution drafting. There was also a general message that program areas and activities would be discussed and closely coordinated with the party headquarters.



NDI staff with the UCPN-M activists in Pokhara.

“Parties nationally and locally should be taught democracy 101. They need to understand what it means first before they can play a role.” A university professor, Pokhara, December 8, 2010.

“People voted for parties so that they can come up with a constitution. Look what is going on now. They are fighting over the PM position.” An NGO representative, Pokhara, December 8, 2010.

5. Central & Eastern Tarai

From December 15 to 19, NDI staff traveled to four districts in the Central and Eastern Tarai and held a total of 13 meetings with local party activists from the UCPN-M, NC, CPN-UML, MJF,N-D, MJF-N, TMLP, RPP, CPN-ML and SP. Preliminary data collected from these consultations indicated that Madesh-based parties, with the exception of MJF-N(D)'s unifying and inclusive message, highlighted their party's representation of only the Tarai population. Furthermore, while the parties speak to the main issues of concern to that population, they remained divided and did not speak with a unified voice.

“For the first time in my life, an international organization has come to discuss local issues and problems with me at the district level, which is very encouraging.” Laxman Raman Jha, Sadhbhawana Party, District Secretary, December 16, 2010

“There is a regional imbalance which needs to be rectified. Madheshis are not effectively represented in decision-making. We (Madheshis) need a new constitution the most.” TMLP activist, Janakpur, December 15, 2010.

Table 2: Political Party Baseline Assessment Meetings

Region	Political Party	Civil Society	Total
Eastern			
Dhankuta & Terathum	5	2	7
Central			
Kavrepalanchowk & Dolakha	6	1	7
Mid and Far West			
Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya & Kailali	19	1	20
Western			
Kaski, Syangja & Tanahu	9	1	10
Central & Easter Tarai			
Dhanusha & Morang	13	-	13
Total	52	5	57

Technical Support to the Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA)

For the last three years, the IPWA, with the assistance of NDI, has been establishing local branches of the Inter Party Women's Alliance at the district level. These district sub-committees, comprised of provincial women leaders and activists, have proven instrumental in lobbying for support and funding of women's initiatives at the local level and have provided women with the opportunity to participate in national political debates, receive information on political events, and share training programs designed for women across party lines. As is the case with the IPWA Central Committee, the leadership positions of the subcommittees - chairperson, co-chairperson, secretary, joint-secretary, and treasurer - has rotated annually, allowing members from different parties to assume and share leadership roles.

On December 22, 2010, NDI met with IPWA board members to review, prepare and print 2,000 copies of the Constituent Assembly and women's leadership development training manual. These manuals have been used as a guide for IPWA trainers and as a reference for sub-committee participants. A number of salient and politically relevant topics were added to the training manual, which included:

1. Concept on State Restructuring
2. Women's Rights (including CEDAW or Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women)
3. Politics and Women
4. Women Leadership Development
5. Constituent Assembly
6. Federalism

On December 29, 2010, with technical support from NDI, IPWA members established sub-committees in Saptari and Sarlahi districts and organized a three-day capacity building training for 40 women activists on women's leadership development. Roughly 100 people from different political parties, civil society organizations and local officials, including the Local Development Officer (LDO), the Chief District Officer (CDO), and the Superintendent of Police (SP), attended the opening session.



IPWA sub-committee formation in Siraha.

With the support of NDI, the IPWA has now established sub-committees in 56 of Nepal's 75 districts.

"I liked the training very much because we were able to form a common 'alliance' of women leaders of different political parties. We understand and know the basic issues of women and we can intervene in various areas if united." Jibachhi Kumari Yadav, Nepali Congress, December 31, 2010.

Political Party Advisory Committee (PAC)

On November 22, NDI facilitated a working session of the PAC with liaisons from eight political parties: RPP, TMLP, NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N, MJF-N,D, CPN-U, SP. During the session, which

was not attended by the UCPN-M due to their party plenum taking place in Gorkha, the party liaisons discussed the formation of a national political party advisory committee to enhance cross-party consensus building and develop a sense of solidarity among parties around issues of common interest. During this session, participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of political parties and the Institute in the PAC. Overall, all participants spoke about the value of having such a mechanism and requested NDI to take the lead in supporting and enhancing political party dialogue and coordination, adding that the Institute should also facilitate greater coordination between the PAC and other donor initiatives.



Political party representatives discuss the terms of reference for the establishment of an inter-party dialogue mechanism during a break out session.

Following the initial meeting, NDI sent a letter to party chairmen with a summary of the working session, a request for feedback on the draft terms of reference (TOR) and a call for parties to nominate members to the PAC. NDI received formal letters from the RPP, TMLP, MJF-N with names of central committee members recommended to take part in the committee.

Distribution of NDI Political Party Publication

In response to increased interest from NDI’s political party partners in receiving resources on internal party democracy and functioning of political parties, NDI distributed 1,000 copies of “Minimum Standards for the Democratic Functioning of Political Parties” to its partners. This NDI publication, which was translated from English into Nepali, provides guidance on developing internal political party democratic norms that cover party behavior, elections, member selection, and party organization. The Institute also circulated copies to party officials during the assessments in the districts. NDI later received a formal request from the MJF-N party for additional copies of the publication, which they used as reference material in various regions and districts during their ongoing political party trainings. Following their request, the Institute provided the party with 475 copies of the publication.

B. Legislative Strengthening

NDI’s legislative strengthening activities are designed to enhance the technical capacity of the legislature and begin to broaden and deepen public participation in legislative processes, during and beyond the current transitional period. This quarter, in addition to NDI’s constituency services work outside of Kathmandu, the Institute met with committee chairs and secretaries in parliament and began working with young CA members to form a parliamentary youth group. NDI and local partner Pro Public also began preparing for public hearing and community dialogues in 10 districts.

This quarter, TAF began its work to improve the parliament library, promote civic awareness of the legislative process, build CSO capacity to monitor the legislative process, and conduct nationwide town hall consultation with youth and women. While one program component—conducting nationwide town hall consultation with youth and women—ran per the workplan, three activities were one to two months behind schedule, largely because the Parliament Secretariat had to allocate significant resources in conducting numerous rounds of prime ministerial elections throughout the quarter.

Effective Committee Work

Meeting with Committee Chairs and Secretaries

NDI met with parliamentary committee chairs and secretaries (Table 3) to provide a general overview of the committee program component and gauge interest from the respective committees. NDI and committee chairs reviewed, in detail, the design of the program, including possible topics for workshops and support from NDI for holding committee hearings outside the capital. NDI later discussed with the chairs and staff a variety of legislative topics, including the sub-committee system, quorum requirements, strategic planning, and formulation of agendas. The committee chairs briefed NDI on the various jurisdictions of the committees and discussed the oversight functions of each committee. Committee chairs and their staff expressed interest in collaborating with NDI over the course of the program.

Table 3: Parliamentary Chair and Secretary Meeting List

Committee	Chairperson	Committee Secretary
Public Accounts Committee (PAC)	Hon. Ram Krishna Yadav	Som Bahadur Thapa
International Relations and	Hon. Padam Lal	Jay Narayan Nepal

Human Rights Committee	Bishwokarma	
Parliamentary Hearing Special Committee	Hon. Kul Bahadur Gurung	Dhurba Prasad Ghimire
Natural Resources and Means Committee	Hon. Shanta Chaudhary	Ram Sharan Ghimire

Meeting with Secretary General, Legislature Parliament Secretariat

During November and December, NDI held a series of meetings with Manohar Bhattarai, secretary general, and Mukunda Sharma, spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat, to establish a strategic relationship with the parliament, to provide an overview of the meetings NDI had just held with parliamentary committee chairs and the concerned secretariat staff members, and to update them on NDI’s past programs with the parliament. NDI provided the Parliament Secretariat with a two-page description on the parliamentary internship program and details on proposed programs with committees. In addition, NDI shared a draft agenda for a listening workshop with committee chairs. The Parliament Secretariat expressed interest and willingness in partnering with NDI.

Committee/Public Hearing Manual

Utilizing NDI’s experience in other regions and drawing on internationally recognized practices, the Institute drafted a manual on committee public hearings. The manual, intended for use by committee chairs, members and staff, would help in the organization and management of effective hearings. The manual will be developed and published next quarter with input and advice from the chairs and members of the parliamentary committees. The manual will be distributed to the committee chairs, members and staff during committee hearing workshops scheduled for next quarter.

Next Generation Parliamentarian Group

NDI facilitated a youth parliamentary group meeting to discuss the possible creation of a parliamentary group aimed at enhancing the role of the young CA members. Altogether, 11 CA members from five political parties, UCPN-M, NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N and Nepal Communist Party-United (NCP-United), and two media representatives participated in the program. NDI staff presented international examples of youth groups (for example, the 50-50 Thursday Group from Bangladesh) in parliament. CA members expressed interest in learning more about parliamentary youth groups and asked questions regarding their formation, activities and sustainability. The meeting selected five of the most interested and active members, representing five different political parties, as “core members” to work with NDI to draft the mission, vision and goal of the youth parliamentary group.

Following the workshop, NDI then held a series of meetings with these core members, which included Hon. Sunil Pant, NCP-United; Hon. Shanti Adhikari, CPN-UML; Hon. Renu Chand Bhatt, UCPN-M; Hon. Chandrika Prasad Yadav, MJF-N; and Hon.



Institute staff at Youth Parliamentary Group Meeting

Sita Gurung, NC. The core group worked to formulate a set of proposals to be presented to all potential members of the youth group. Upon the group's request, NDI compiled sample terms of reference (TORs), by-laws, charters, and rules and regulations of women's caucuses, youth and other parliamentary groups from other countries. Using these documents for reference and as examples, the core members discussed a wide range of organizational issues, including proposed selection criteria for membership, and how to structure the group. The members drafted a proposed TOR that will be presented to the larger group of potential members for approval.

Members then began meeting with the chief whips of their respective political parties and developed a timeline to contact whips of all the political parties to explain the group's objectives and to garner their support in inviting participants. Members also agreed to meet with the speaker and secretary general of the parliament secretariat to brief them about the group.

NDI then facilitated a discussion session with core members to discuss and finalize the details of the larger event, scheduled for next quarter. NDI and the core members discussed the selection criteria of the invitees, venue, invitation letters and agenda for the event. It was determined that all first-termers would be invited to attend, and that at this event, to be held next quarter, the draft TOR would be presented, and a process for selection of officers and members would be finalized.

Constituency Services Program

NDI visited the Lalitpur constituency services office to meet Constituency Coordinator Anil Chalise. The coordinator briefed the Institute on the day-to-day activities of the office, his interactions with constituents, actions taken by the office and relations with local officials. NDI also discussed with him the details of a database to track all of the constituents who use the services of the constituency offices.

Constituency coordinators from the three NDI-supported constituency offices in Lalitpur, Dhanusha and Arghakhanchi had previously been trained to collect basic information such as names, addresses and contact information and to prepare manually compile information for their respective offices. Simple templates were being used to facilitate easier data capture and entry. However, the Institute plans to implement a more detailed web based database to enable the coordinators, parliamentarians and NDI staff to access information including number of constituents' visits to the offices, the number and types of cases filed in the office, updates on the action taken, and outcomes. Based on the specifications for a web-based database management system, NDI staff revised the existing constituent casework-recording sheet. The recording sheet was modified to track additional information such as constituents' ward number, name of the village or municipality, constituency number and possible outcome categories related to cases.

Meanwhile, NDI also developed a checklist to be completed by NDI staff during visits to constituency offices with the aim of establishing an effective monitoring system. The information collected will be helpful in evaluating the offices' effectiveness.

A meeting with CA members from the three districts where NDI supports constituency offices has been scheduled for the next quarter.

Public Hearings, Community Dialogues and Round Table Discussions Program

NDI held consultations with local partner Forum for the Protection of Public Interest (Pro Public) to finalize the selection criteria for local NGOs in the public hearings, community dialogues and round table discussions. Criteria for the selection of local NGOs include:

- Must be registered as an NGO at the District Administrative Office and Social Welfare Council (SWC).
- Must file annual audits;
- Must be actively working in the districts where NDI's program activities will be implemented;
- Must be involved in activities related to democracy, human rights, good governance or transparency;
- Must have a functioning Board with an annual general meeting, regular board meetings and transparent selection of board members and staff. Should have an open, democratic and transparent management system;
- Must be willing to develop collaborative relationships with government offices, NGOs, community based organizations and networks.

Based on the selection criteria, Pro Public and NDI jointly identified and collected information on five potential NGOs from each of 10 targeted districts: Dhankuta and Siraha from the Eastern region; Nuwakot and Bara from Central region; Syangja and Kapilvastu from the Western region; Surkhet and Dailekh from the Mid-Western region; and Doti and Kanchanpur from the Far-Western region. NDI and Pro-Public will select one out of five short-listed NGOs in each district based on the criteria above.

Improving the Parliamentary Library

This quarter, TAF held two rounds of discussions with the Secretary General of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament on developing a five-year library improvement plan. The library development plan will conduct an assessment of existing infrastructure, management capacity, human resource quality, archiving and cataloging systems, relevance and use of existing collection, collection building sources and strategy and recommend specific interventions required to enhance the library's collection and management capacity. To this end, TAF reached a preliminary understanding to constitute a planning team comprised of a joint-secretary level staff member from the Secretariat, Parliament librarian, the chief librarian of the Tribhuvan University central library, and a consultant. TAF is currently negotiating the terms of the consulting assignment with Krishna Mani Bhandari, who will initiate the assessment on behalf of the planning team in the third week of January. In November, the General Secretary asked TAF to wait until the conclusion of the prime minister election, citing a shortness of staff during this period. Since the process of electing a new prime minister continued through the quarter, TAF began discussions with the consultants and the Secretariat to initiate the assessment by the third week of January, irrespective of the election schedule. As of the end of this reporting period, the activity had been delayed by about two months, but TAF expects the planning phase to be completed by the end of the next quarter.

Promoting Civic Awareness of the Legislative Process

This quarter, TAF and its local partner Interface Nepal, began designing a radio program to inform the public on legislative events and political debates surrounding key legislation. The radio program

is on schedule to begin airing in March 2011. TAF was not able to initiate a needs assessment of the media center and initiate consultations on the media policy during this quarter for the reasons cited above. As with 3.A.2.d, TAF fell two months behind schedule on this activity but expects to move quickly to complete the assessments within the coming quarter.

Interest Group Audit Reports

In December, TAF worked with Dalits, Madhesis, women, Janajatis and youth groups to begin drafting interest group audit reports. The audits are legal analyses conducted on proposed legislation from the point of view of the marginalized constituencies. The discussions, organized by the Nepal Transition to Peace Forum (NTTP), a USAID-supported Track 1.5 forum convened to support the Nepali peace process, will form the basis for the guidelines for the interest group audits of the draft legislation proposed by the parliament. The interest group audits will be ready for public dissemination in February and will be aired through the radio show (*described above*) and concurrently through three print media outlets.

Town Hall Consultations with Youth and Women

TAF, working with three local partner NGOs, Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDSC), and WomenAct (WA), began preparations to conduct town hall meetings with youth and women in 45 municipalities across Nepal. In November, 2010 TAF hired a consultant to develop a training module for the moderators from partner NGOs who will be conducting the Town Hall meetings and to determine the agendas for the first wave of town hall meetings. On December 28 and 29, TAF trained 21 moderators on the methods of conducting meetings and on the content of the legislation. The moderators were then deployed to the field to conduct the town hall meetings. The first set of town hall meetings is set to begin in January 2011.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

NDI submitted a comprehensive M&E Plan including the results framework, the M&E narrative and the performance management and evaluation plan to USAID. Targets for the foreign assistance indicators, as well as their projection for each successive year till 2013, have been set. Preparations were ongoing for a baseline assessment to refine indicators, critical assumptions and risks as well as specify staff member's M&E roles and responsibilities.

D. Meetings/Consultations/Events

On November 16, NDI held an introductory meeting with International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to discuss coordination and possible collaboration between the two organizations. On November 18, NDI also attended a book launching event for the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, which published a book titled *Women's rights and agenda to be incorporated in the new Constitution*.

On November 23, at the request of Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and with USAID's participation, NDI met with representatives of DANIDA and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) to provide an update on its political party program, including the creation of the PAC, IPWA expansion in the remaining districts and the political party baseline assessments. NDI offered to share its baseline assessment findings with the donors in early 2011 to identify party assistance priorities and discuss areas for collaboration, cooperation and coordinating.

NDI attended a donor roundtable discussion organized by the Institute for Inclusive Security to provide input on training projects and proposals developed to advance the participation of women in the peace and security processes. The roundtable discussion was part of a South Asia Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop organized from November 15 to 23. The workshop for approximately 30 experienced women trainers from Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka focused on training methodology. The curriculum was titled “Inclusive Security: A Curriculum for Women Waging Peace.” Attendees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nepal expressed familiarity with NDI and appreciation for its programs.

On December 2, NDI was invited to the residence of US Ambassador Scott DeLisi to meet with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Dr. Alyssa Ayres. Ayres, whose portfolio includes India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives, was on a tour of South Asia following her recent appointment to the position. Also present were representatives from the Asia Foundation, USAID, and the Center for Constitutional Dialogue. Ayres expressed familiarity with NDI and interest in and support for its programs.

On December 17, NDI attended an event of the Constitution Information Centers (CICs) organized by Nepal Law Society (NLS), International IDEA and Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal/United Nations Development Programme SPCBN/UNDP in coordination with the CA Secretariat. The event was organized to review the activities of all five regional CICs and solicited feedback from central level stakeholders such as CA members, INGOs, donors, and representatives of civil society. NDI discussed collaborating with NLS representative regarding the CICs and NDI’s Constituency Offices, specifically in Dhanusha district.

On December 21, NDI was invited by Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) and HimRights to participate in the concluding ceremony of the Second National Girl Child Consultation held in Kathmandu. The consultation was organized by BBC in association with Action Aid Nepal, Consortium, HimRights, Plan Nepal, UNICEF, UNFPA, DFID and World Vision.

IV. RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Objective 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

- NDI held 52 meetings with nine political parties in 15 districts across all of Nepal’s five developmental regions. The Institute gained an in-depth understanding of party operations, limitations, challenges and opportunities.
- Party cadres expressed enthusiasm working with NDI and presented honest assessments of their party’s strengths and weaknesses. The meetings fostered close ties between NDI and local party members and NGO staff, which enhanced local buy-in, involvement and ownership.
- NDI established links with the UCPN-M, who have been reluctant to participate in previous NDI activities. UCPN-M leaders expressed interest in working with NDI both at the national and local level. After Maoists leadership offered to contact local party activists to ensure their participation in conducting baseline assessments, NDI met with party cadres in five districts.

- NDI and the IPWA successfully established two sub-committees, bringing the total to 56 districts. District level members not only developed their capacity to effectively present local issues to CA/Parliament members, but they also produced cohesive lobbying and advocacy bodies to promote and advance women's issues.

Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions

- The Institute established a partnership with the Parliament Secretariat to implement a parliamentary strengthening program component.
- Sample templates have been developed and provided to trained constituency coordinators to collect basic constituent information such as names, addresses and contact numbers and to prepare databases for their respective offices. The database will enable both the coordinators and the constituents to access basic information about their districts.
- The Institute established a partnership with Pro Public to implement the upcoming public hearings, community dialogues and round table discussions and developed criteria for the selection of local NGOs.

V. EVALUATION

Despite ongoing tension between political parties and gridlock in the CA this quarter, NDI's local partners confirmed their intentions and actively participated in the SPELP program. This represents an early step toward reaching the program's intermediate results and eventually the long-term objectives. Generally, the party assessments provided an opportunity for NDI to introduce its new staff and discuss the general guidelines of its five-year political party program. Local officials were overwhelmingly positive, seemed eager to participate in ongoing party strengthening activities, and expressed their appreciation for NDI's collaborative approach to technical assistance and focus on local party structures and practices.

However, it is worth noting that the absence of a coherent government coalition, the lack of progress on constitution drafting, the internal divisions and factions within political parties, and continuous party splits have had a negative impact on political parties' ability to strategize, organize and implement relevant political party activities. Parties could not focus on their activities and efforts under this program given the distractions of the volatile political situation. While some party leaders believed they should organize and mobilize their members and supporters through consistent party messaging, others decided to wait until concrete progress was made on the constitution drafting and peace processes before conducting costly outreach activities.

Of particular note was the positive response the Institute received in meetings with the UCPN-M, who have been hesitant to participate in past NDI programs. On October 1, NDI first met with Khimlal Devkota, Maoist CA member and head of the party's constitutional drafting committee. Khimlal engaged in a frank discussion about the transition inside the UCPN-M from a party line refusal to collaborate with any international organization to a gradual interest in receiving access to technical assistance. Khimal also suggested ways to engage the party with a degree of flexibility regarding the shape and approach to the assistance program. Khimlal stated that he was in favor of technical assistance and that he would continue to play a mediator's role, especially as it relates to collaboration with international organizations. Khimlal stated that NDI might see varying degrees

of cooperation and understanding in the districts between older local leaders, who may be reluctant to cooperate, and the more open local youth members.

In mid-December, following the talks with Khimlal and after sending a formal letter to Maoist Party Chairman Dahal requesting a meeting with senior party leadership, NDI met with Maoist central committee member Hon. Pampha Bhusal, and Hon. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the head of the party's international relations department. During the meeting, NDI provided a general overview of the political party strengthening program, and Mahara emphasized the Maoist's changed stance on cooperation with international organizations. He added that the current U.S. Ambassador's approach helped the Maoists move towards greater collaboration and cooperation. Mahara also stated that as more international organizations grow to know his party, they would discover that it is internally democratic. The meeting ended with the party expressing interest in working with NDI, an invitation to a reception with UCPN-M central committee members, and offers to contact district-level party activists to ensure NDI meets with local members to conduct baseline assessments.

Following these discussions, the Institute met with UCPN-M party activists in five of the 15 districts. This was a major accomplishment and signaled a discernable change in the Maoist's policy towards working with U.S.-funded projects. Based on several meetings, the Institute noticed that one of the UCPN-M's consistent messages was their interest in collaborating with U.S. and international organizations. However, while the party maintains strict message discipline throughout its ranks, some party activists disagreed on how to best collaborate with international assistance initiatives and next steps in the peace process. The Institute will continue to monitor the UCPN-M's genuine interest in actively cooperating and collaborating with NDI.

The first series of introductory meetings with the representatives of Parliamentary Committees and the Secretariat was equally positive. During these meetings, both Secretariat staff and Committee chairs expressed willingness to provide input on the public hearing manual and collaborate with NDI in organizing committee hearings. Given Nepal's political uncertainty and possible changes under a new federal system, the Institute and its partners were cognizant that all capacity building should ensure a long-lasting and sustainable impact.

Finally, the emergence of a political party advisory committee has been received well by both the parties and international donors. NDI expects the committee to serve as a coordinating body on cross-party issues and could potentially become a key point of contact between parties and members of the donor community interested in political party development and reform.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

A. Political Party Development

- NDI will draft nine political party baseline assessment reports and develop PowerPoint presentations on each party to present the assessment findings and outline the areas and needs expressed by the various levels of the party. The Institute will then discuss and design individual political party training plans and MOUs with each party.
- NDI will finalize the TOR for the creation of a political party advisory committee with members of nine political parties. The Institute will also organize a formal launch of this entity and work with its members on the development of an action plan and timeline of the

issues to be debated, the technical support to be received, and the nature of the activities to be conducted.

- NDI will hold consultations with the IPWA and support their expansion through the formation of at least two districts committees and the organization of capacity-building trainings for the newly elected women members.
- Internews will launch its program by providing three sub-grants to the Antenna Foundation, Freedom Forum and the Federation of Nepali journalists. Internews will recruit its fulltime project director and as well as its investigative journalism training consultant. Its training consultant will work with the Antenna Foundation to develop a two week training methodology for investigative journalism with a focus on electoral processes and political party development.
- Freedom Forum will work with Internews' technical consultant to expand out its website to enable election specific content including a monthly media-monitoring bulletin which highlights current trends in the Nepali media in covering the electoral process and the larger process of political reform and development in the country. It will also launch its blog which will comment on the findings of the media monitoring and other trends in the media including threats to journalists who are covering politics.
- The Federation of Nepali Journalists will begin recruitment of three district advisors who will help with the recruitment of journalists for forthcoming trainings held by the Antenna Foundation and who will help provide feedback and content for Freedom Forum for their website.
- Internews will hire Hart Security to conduct training of trainers in hostile environments for the Antenna Foundations trainers. This course will focus on developing a short security training module which will later be integrated into their two-week investigative journalism training programs.

B. Legislative Strengthening

- NDI will hold a meeting with the Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament to introduce NDI senior staff and to garner support and collaboration for the Institute's legislative strengthening component.
- NDI will hold an introductory workshop for committee chairs and staff to discuss international practices, to assess Nepal's experience with effective committee work, and to plan for committee-specific activities.
- NDI will consult with the Parliament Secretariat and universities to develop a MOU with partner universities for the parliamentary intern program. In addition, NDI will work with faculties from various universities to solicit applications.
- NDI will hold a training for the NGOs representatives of the 10 targeted districts to orient them on how to effectively implement the public hearings and community dialogue

program. Topics will include: moderation skills, the organization of public hearings and community dialogues, and ways to correspond and engage with representatives.

- NDI will organize workshop for the CA members of 10 targeted districts in order to brief them on the organization of issue-based public hearings and community dialogues.
- NDI and Pro Public will conduct the first round of public hearings and community dialogues in 10 districts.
- NDI will organize constituency outreach events in the three constituency offices in Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur.
- NDI will facilitate an event to formally launch the “Next Generation Parliamentarian Group.”
- TAF will complete the five-year library development plan.
- TAF will complete the need-assessment of the parliament’s media center.
- TAF will complete all 45 town hall consultations with youth and women.
- TAF will complete first of the twelve interest group audits of proposed legislation.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

- NDI will create assessment tools and begin to collect baseline data. This information will be used to tailor technical assistance to stakeholder needs and provide a benchmark against which programming will later be assessed.
- NDI will deploy an NDI M&E staff member and an M&E consultant to assist with the baseline assessments and the M&E system startup.